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BIBLE MANUAL.

BIBLE MANUAL:

AN INTRODUCTION TO

THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE HISTORY

WITH

ANALYSES OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.

BY

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EDINBURGH: SUTHERLAND AND KNOX.

LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, AND CO.

MDCCCLVII.

EDINBURGH: T. CONSTABLE, PRINTER TO HER MAJESTY.

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BIBLE MANUAL.

CHAPTER I.

ANTEDILUVIAN PERIOD.

1. The Book of Genesis contains principally the family records of the Hebrew Patriarchs, to whom the promise of a Deliverer, originally given to Eve, was renewed. It is rather a series of biographies than a history. The preface to the Bible (Gen. i.–ii. 3) contains a brief account of the creation of the universe by God, and of man's high position, as king of every living thing on earth. The inspired writer then proceeds to the covenant made with Adam, his honour and fall. Sentence was passed upon him; but the prospect of deliverance from it was held out. The division of the human race into the families of Cain and Seth, their different characters and fortunes, form the next part of the book. Every kind of wickedness resulted from the union of these families in course of time; and, with the exception of eight persons, the whole race was at last swept away by a flood.

2. The *tree of life*, and the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, which the Creator planted in Eden, were sacraments of the covenant made with Adam by God. Life was promised as the reward of obedience to God's commands, and "the tree of

life" was given as a sensible sign of the good purposes of Jehovah towards Adam. Every time he partook of its fruit, he was reminded that the keeping of the covenant would be rewarded with everlasting bliss. In the same way, the tree of knowledge was at once a test of obedience, and a symbol of the punishment that would befall a breach of the covenant. Jehovah said, Abstain from that tree; and the apparent ease with which that simple command might have been kept, would render disobedience more heinous. If Adam partook of its fruit, he would then become conscious of evil only, as he was before conscious of good only. Fruit had not the power of giving either life or knowledge; any more than bread or wine, in the Lord's Supper, can by itself give spiritual blessings; but life or death, by the appointment of God, was immediately connected with abstaining or eating. Adam was driven from the garden lest he might presumptuously think, that by eating of the tree of life, God's judgment would be rendered powerless.[1]

3. The descendants of Adam were soon divided into the two families of Cain and Seth, one vicious, the other devoted to the service of God. Cain and his descendants are called the children of men; Seth and his family, in whom the true human race was propagated, the sons of God. The former removed at an early period from the neighbourhood of Eden; the latter continued to dwell with Adam. By comparing the two genealogies given in Scripture, it will be found that there is a manifest contrast drawn between the histories of the Cainites and Sethites. The first great event in the existence of the former, as a separate community, is the *building of a city*—that is, making provision for their bodily wants. On the other hand, the latter inaugurates its existence as a nation by providing for spiritual wants—"men began to call on the name of Jehovah." Enoch, also, a descendant of Seth, "walked with God, and he was not, for God took him," showing still more clearly the spiritual character of this family, and their belief in a future state of rewards and punishments. Each genealogy closes with a Lamech,

[1] Gen. iii. 22.

and each Lamech has embodied in song the wants and hopes that he felt. The Cainite is, like his ancestor, of this world; the Sethite hopes for rest, and looks back to the original promise. Both had children: the Cainite was the father of great and worldly men; the Sethite of the good and heavenly-minded Noah. The union of these two families, in Noah's days, led to the crimes and wickedness which brought the flood upon the earth. The contrast between Cain and Seth is manifestly the same as that drawn by Paul between Ishmael and Isaac; the one was born after the flesh, the other was by promise.[1]

4. The arts and sciences were first developed among the Cainites. Tent-making, and the nomadic life of shepherds, originated with one of Lamech the Cainite's sons; musical instruments were invented by another. Tubal-Cain was the first to use copper and iron in the arts; and Naamah, his sister, is said by the Jews to have invented spinning. As Cain built a city several centuries before the age of Lamech, it is probable that Tubal-Cain did not invent, but only improved the art of working in metals. Very different is the account given of the Sethite race. True religion, founded on the promise made to Eve, was developed among them. The cherubim and the flaming sword, placed on the east of Eden, may have been at once a place of worship, and an emblem of the wrath that required to be taken away. Hebrews at least, accustomed to the temple service and the cherubim overshadowing the mercy-seat, would naturally be led to suppose that Adam and his pious children worshipped before the gate of Eden, and, like the Jewish high-priest, were there allowed to hold direct communication with God. Soon, however, increasing wickedness deprived them of this blessing—men began to worship an unseen God.[2] Altars were also built and sacrifices offered, most likely by the command of God himself; and the law had been communicated to man that the first-fruits of all his increase, whether from the field or the flock, belong to the Divine Being. The distinction between clean and unclean animals was also laid down, and some only

[1] Gal. iv. 23.

[2] Probably about 235 A.M.

were used for sacrifice or food. Faith in a future Deliverer from the effects of the Fall, continued to flourish in the Sethite family till the time of Noah.

5. In antediluvian times cities were built, vineyards planted, the value of the olive known, and agriculture—the toil of men's hands—was extensively practised. Stone was used for building where it could be had, and bricks dried in the sun where it could not. Cement, probably formed from clay, was used; but bitumen, which rises to the surface of several lakes around Babylon, and hardens on exposure to the air, was preferred.[1] As measures of length and time are also mentioned during this period, men must have possessed some knowledge of surveying and astronomy. The "mighty men of renown," before the flood, earned their greatness with swords and armour forged from iron and copper. A knowledge of several arts was required before the harp and pipe (organ) could be made or used. Clothing was got at first from the leaves of trees and the skins of animals, though cloth, woollen and possibly coarse linen, was afterwards invented. Notices of the state of civil society during the period are few and brief. The murderer was punished with death; but that law was sometimes not enforced, owing to the wickedness of the times. Criminals were beaten with the rod; if we may judge from the song of Lamech, where the word "hurt"[2] means the bruise caused by a scourge. Polygamy appears to have been introduced by the Cainite Lamech; but the connexion in which mention of it occurs is not to the credit of the innovation. Families then were not more numerous than they are now; at least, Lamech's household consisted of only three sons and one daughter, and Noah's of three sons. "He begat sons and daughters," was merely a phrase equivalent to, "he had a family."[3]

6. The foundation of the Church was laid immediately after the Fall; a deliverer from the effects of the curse was promised to Eve. A triumphant, and at the same time a suffering Saviour

[1] Gen. xi. 3. [2] Gen. iv. 23.

[3] In Gen. xlvi. 15, "daughters" occurs, although only one is mentioned.

was revealed in Eden, but his triumph appears to have been the hope of believers more than his sufferings. His manhood was also revealed. It was foretold that he should be "of her seed," not "his seed;" the seed of the woman, not the seed of the man. The expression is peculiar, and does not occur again in Scripture. Messiah was of Abraham's seed, not Sarah's; of Jacob's, not Leah's; of David's, not Bathsheba's; but of Eve's, not Adam's. Paul has explained this phrase in one of his epistles to mean "made of a woman," that is, *virgin-born*. Messiah was also regarded by the antediluvians as *the giver of rest;* but they looked for an outward deliverance from the work and toil of their hands, rather than an inward deliverance from the power of sin. Whether Eve's exclamation, "I have gotten a man from Jehovah," refers to the expected deliverer, may be questioned; but there can be no doubt that Lamech the Sethite regarded the original promise when he named his son Noah, and possibly considered him the deliverer, whom former ages had looked for in vain.

CHAPTER II.

AGE OF THE PATRIARCHS.

7. The grant of universal dominion, originally given to Adam, was renewed to Noah. Men were commanded to punish the murderer with death, a law which was probably not observed in the period of violence and wickedness that preceded the deluge. Flesh, quite free from blood, was also allowed to be eaten, and the rainbow was made a sign of God's promise that he would never destroy the race of man again with a flood. It is not necessary to suppose that the rainbow was then created on purpose. Fruit was not created for the first time when it was made a sign of the first covenant, nor bread and wine when they

were made signs of the second. God set apart the rainbow, as he might have done any other of his creatures, to this special service. The confusion of tongues at Babylon, and the division of the earth among the descendants of Noah, are then narrated, though very briefly. Scripture gives at length only the history of Abram, to whom the promise of a deliverer descended through Shem.

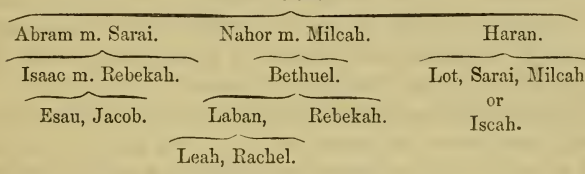
8. A comparison of the genealogical tree of Shem, with that of Seth, brings out some curious results :—

Name.	Age at Birth of Eldest Son.	Age at Death.	Name.	Age at Birth of Eldest Son.	Age at Death.
Adam, . .	...	930	Shem, . .	100	600
Seth, . . .	105	912	Arphaxad, .	35	438
Enos, . .	90	905	Salah, . .	30	433
Cainan, . .	70	910	Eber, . .	34	464
Mahalaleel, .	65	895	Peleg, . .	30	239
Jared, . .	162	962	Reu, . . .	32	239
Enoch, . .	65	[365]	Serug, . .	30	230
Methuselah,	187	969	Nahor, . .	29	148
Lamech, .	182	777	Terah, . .	70?	205
Noah, . .	500	950	Abraham, .	100	175

9. It appears from the table that, in the period after the flood, parents were usually about thirty years of age when their eldest son was born ; but the antediluvians were a hundred and sometimes nearly two hundred years of age at that time. The former began to have a family when from a fourteenth to a fifth part of their life was run ; the latter generally when a fifth or a tenth of it was spent. One would infer from this that the average number of a family was greater after the flood than before it.[1] Another interesting point connected with these registers is, that the distinguished men in them were born at a comparatively advanced period in their fathers' lives. This is true of Seth, Enoch, Lamech, Noah, Shem, Abraham, and Isaac. The shortening of human life after the flood is very striking. Arphaxad,

[1] Shem had five sons, for example, Aram had four, and Joktan thirteen.

Salah, and Eber, lived between 400 and 500 years each; Peleg, Reu, and Serug, about 230; and the next group shows another marked diminution. Shem outlived all his descendants, except Eber, down to Isaac, and died when that patriarch was 110 years of age. If he was Melchizedek, a supposition by no means unlikely, he may have conversed with Jacob on the one hand, and with a man who had been an acquaintance of Adam on the other. The descendants of Terah, and their relation to each other, may be seen from the following table:—



Sarai was the daughter, that is, according to a very common use of the word among the Hebrews, grand-daughter of Terah, but not by Abram's mother.[1]

10. Abram belonged to the family of Shem, and spent the first seventy-five years of his life in Mesopotamia. He was then called by God to leave his father's house in Haran, and the idolatry practised there,[2] for another land and a purer worship. God informed him that his descendants, although he was then childless, should become a great nation, and that he himself should prove a blessing to all families of the earth. Accompanied by his wife Sarai, and his nephew Lot, with numerous flocks and herds, he set out for Canaan.[3] Shechem was the first place at which he encamped after crossing the Jordan; and God assured him there, that his children should possess that country. An altar was built to Jehovah in commemoration of this promise. His next encampment and altar were a little to the east of Bethel, for the flocks which he and Lot possessed rendered it necessary to move from place to place. A drought destroyed

[1] Gen. xx. 12.
[2] Joshua xxiv. 14.
[3] Terah lived about sixty years after this. See on Acts vii.

the pastures, and the two friends were compelled to remove to Egypt, where there was abundance of food for their cattle. The king of Egypt then resided near the Delta, not in the upper course of the Nile; and the arrival of Abram was soon reported at his court. As it was not customary in ancient Egypt for women to veil their faces,[1] the beauty of Sarai, who passed for Abram's sister, became the common talk of his nobles. Pharaoh intended to make her one of his wives, and sought Abram's consent by numerous presents.[2] The Egyptian soon found, however, by the calamities inflicted upon his household, that Sarai was the wife of Abram; and he averted the danger with which his family was threatened by restoring her to her husband, and sending them away unharmed.[3]—(Gen. xii.)

11. When Abram reached Bethel, dissensions broke out between his servants and those of Lot, most likely about the right to wells of water, which were matter of treaty even between powerful nations in ancient times.[4] A separation took place in consequence, though the warmest love prevailed between Lot and his uncle; the former journeyed eastward from Bethel to the neighbourhood of Sodom; the latter southward to Hebron, one of the oldest cities in the world,[5] after he had received a renewal of the promise that he should be the father of a numerous seed, to whom the whole land in which he then was would be given. About this time the city of Sodom, and several other petty states, were attacked and conquered by four Mesopotamian kings, from whom they had revolted in the previous year. Some of the tribes which were thus subdued were once famous nations; and their names may now be read by the learned on the monuments of ancient Egypt, though thousands of years have elapsed since they disappeared from the

[1] Gen. xii. 14.

[2] Horses are not enumerated among these presents, because they were not used in Canaan at that time, though perhaps common in Egypt. Asses are mentioned, however, because these sure-footed animals were invaluable in the rugged districts of Palestine.

[3] Josephus asserts that Abram taught the priests of Egypt arithmetic and astronomy.

[4] On the monuments of Egypt, the king of Sheth (Moab), and the mighty Sesostris enter into a treaty about two spring-wells. Compare Gen. xxi. 25-31; xxvi. 15-33.

[5] Numbers xiii. 22.

face of the earth.[1] The storm of war swept over the countries south and east of the Dead Sea, and did not reach Abram. A fugitive from the scene of slaughter reported that Lot was carried captive with his family and flocks. Abram armed 318 servants of tried fidelity,[2] and pursued the invaders. The three chiefs of Hebron, with whom he was in alliance, lent him their assistance. He overtook the enemy not far from the source of Jordan,[3] defeated them with great slaughter in a night attack, and recovered all the spoil. Melchizedek and the king of Sodom awaited his return; the former to bless him in the name of God, the possessor of heaven and earth; the latter to propose a distribution of the spoil, by no means disadvantageous to himself.[4] Abram repaid the blessing of Melchizedek by giving him a tenth of the spoil, and showed his contempt for the king of Sodom by refusing to retain any part of it for himself.—(Gen. xiii. xiv.)

12. It was at this time that the faith of Abram in God, notwithstanding many circumstances fitted to inspire doubt, shone most brightly. He was now far advanced in years, but did not despair of having a son, as God had promised. To reward his faith the history of his descendants for several generations was revealed to him in vision.[5] Ishmael was born, but Abram was not allowed to suppose that he was the promised seed. Thirteen years after, when the patriarch was nearly 100 years of age, another interview with Jehovah is vouchsafed; and the promise is fuller and clearer than ever:—he will become a father of many nations, an ancestor of kings, and Jehovah will be their God. To commemorate these blessings and to reward his faith, his name is changed to Abraham;[6] Sarai is called Sarah, *princess;* and the rite of circumcision is instituted as a sign of God's faith-

[1] Zuzim, Rephaim (Josh. xv. 8; 2 Sam. v. 18), and Emim.

[2] *Trained* in our version. The whole story is analogous to the defeat of Midian by Gideon.

[3] At Dan, but not the Dan afterwards founded by members of that tribe—perhaps at Dan-jaan (2 Sam. xxiv. 6), not Dan-laish.

[4] The king asked the persons, and wished Abram to keep the goods; but *persons* would include the slaves taken in the battle, and therefore the most valuable part of the spoil.

[5] Gen. xv. 13-16. "A generation" here, from the great ages attained by the patriarchs, means 100 years.

[6] *Abram*, father of height; *Abraham*, father of a multitude.

fulness. A few months after, he received a visit from three heavenly messengers, and the promise was renewed. Sarah is incredulous; but Abraham believes, and is told of the ruin impending over wicked Sodom. He is even allowed to plead with God in human form, for the doomed city. He had once saved its inhabitants from ruin already; but he was now contending with Divine justice, not with lawless spoilers from Mesopotamia, and his efforts were in vain. What a strong contrast there is in Gen. xviii. and xix., between the families of Abraham and Lot; the one sealed with an everlasting covenant, through the faithfulness of its head; the other, plunged in despair and wickedness through the worldliness of its members!—(Gen. xv.-xix.)

13. But even Abraham falls into grievous sin. Circumstances compelled him to remove his encampment to Gerar, a city of the Philistines; he lies to Abimelech, king of the place, in calling Sarah his sister, and once more nearly involves a nation in ruin. Leaving the city, he dwelt in the valley of Gerar, and dug several wells for his flocks, which the natives afterwards filled up. Probably Isaac was born in that district; for his birth happened at this time, and the digging of wells, by Abraham's servants, implies a lengthened residence in the neighbourhood. Abraham was then one hundred years of age, and Sarah ninety. Ishmael and his mother were soon sent away from the encampment to appease the jealousy of Sarah; but Abraham still maintained friendly communications with his eldest son.

14. When Isaac was grown up, Abraham was commanded to offer him as a burnt-offering to God, on Mount Moriah, forty miles north-east of Beersheba, where he was then residing. The command came to him in a dream by night, and he set out for the mountain early on the following morning; but it was only a test of Abraham's faith, not an action which he was allowed to perform. The offering of Isaac symbolized the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the sins of men, though, in the latter case, the sacrifice was really made. A renewal of two blessings, formerly promised, rewarded the obedience of the patriarch—he was assured of a numerous and prosperous progeny, and from him the

bestower of blessings on all mankind, the deliverer promised to Eve, should descend.[1]—(Gen. xxii.)

15. Few notices of the remainder of Abraham's life are contained in Scripture. Sarah died when 127 years of age, and was buried in the cave of Machpelah. Three years after, the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah took place, one of those romantic and simple narratives which give a peculiar charm to the historical parts of Scripture. Although Hagar is the only concubine of Abraham of whom much is said in Scripture, he had at least one more named Keturah, who became his wife after Sarah's death.[2] He gave the six sons whom she bore him large presents, and sent them away into the east country, lest they might cause Isaac trouble after his death. Some of them became the heads or founders of desert tribes, such as Dedan, Sheba, and Midian. Abraham died at the age of 175, and was buried in Machpelah by Isaac and Ishmael.—(Gen. xxiii. 1-xxv. 10.)

16. Ishmael's life and character are very briefly sketched in Scripture. It was predicted before his birth that he should be a wild man, at variance with every tribe but his own. He died, or rather fell as he lived, in presence of all his brethren; foremost in desert forays—the leader of his band in peace and war.

17. Scripture proceeds with the history of Isaac. Twenty years elapsed, after the marriage of Isaac, before Esau and Jacob were born.[3] Drought again destroyed the pastures in that part of Palestine where Isaac resided, and he removed to Gerar. His father's wells had been filled up by the Philistines; but they were discovered, and again used. It appears that Isaac gave them the same names as they had in his father's days; and this explains why Beersheba is said to have received its name first from Abraham and then from Isaac.[4] Isaac also built an altar in Beersheba; and departed so far from the nomadic life of his father as to till the ground in the fertile valley of Gerar.—(Gen. xxv. 11-xxvi. 35.)

18. The other notices of Isaac's life refer to domestic matters

[1] Heb. xi. 17-19.
[2] Gen. xxv. 1-6; 1 Chron. i. 32.
[3] Gen. xxv. 19-34.
[4] Gen. xxvi. 18, 26-33; comp. xxi. 22-32.

—the dissensions in his family caused by Esau's unhallowed marriages, the stealing of the blessing by Jacob at Beersheba, and his flight to Mesopotamia,[1] and the patriarch's death in Hebron, at the mature age of 180, after having been blind and bedridden for upwards of forty years.—(Gen. xxvii.)

19. Esau connected himself with the family of Ishmael, when he saw that his first marriages, with the two Hittite women, displeased his parents. About twenty years after, he is at the head of 400 men, and appears to be ruler over Mount Seir. Instead of being the *servant* of Jacob, as he expected,[2] Jacob is now forward to call him *lord*, and to request *grace in his sight*.[3] Unbelief had reduced the heir of the promise to this humbling condition; and Esau, satisfied with present prosperity, could not see his father's blessing fulfilled in future ages.

20. The life of Jacob is given with considerable detail in Scripture, because in him a great step was made towards the fulfilment of the promise. When at Bethel, on the way to Mesopotamia, the patriarch received a renewal of the promise, and in consequence devoted a tenth part of all his substance to the service of God.[4] He called the place where this happened, Beth-el or God's House, a phrase not uncommon afterwards, and long before the temple was built. Monumental pillars are mentioned for the first time in connexion with this visit to Bethel.—(Gen. xxviii.)

21. Jacob continued to reside in Padan-aram for twenty years; and all his children, except Benjamin, were born in that country. Through God's blessing he acquired great wealth in this foreign land. When he returned to Canaan, Reuben, his eldest son, could not have been more than fourteen years of age, and Simeon and Levi more than thirteen and twelve. On reaching Gilead, he was favoured with a vision of angels to assure him of protection against his brother Esau. He had sent messengers to Seir intimating his arrival; and his faith failed when they informed him of Esau's

[1] Gen. xxvii. 15. The words "goodly raiment" have been interpreted to mean priestly robes, but this is purely fanciful.

[2] Gen. xxvii. 37.

[3] Gen. xxxii. 4; xxxiii. 13-15.

[4] Comp. Gen. xxviii. 20-22; xxxi. 13.

great power. But he prevailed, in spiritual wrestling, with a visitant from the unseen world at Penuel, and he was told that it is easier to overcome a mortal than to prevail with God. Another name was given him in token of the great faith he had displayed—Israel, *contender with God.* Encouraged by this interview with the heavenly messenger, he met his brother and parted from him in peace. Jacob then proceeded to Succoth, where he appears to have resided for some time. He next crossed the Jordan, and encamped in the territory of Hamor, prince of Shechem, where a sad tragedy occurred in his family. Simeon and Levi, now grown up to manhood, armed their father's servants to avenge the dishonour done by the king's son to their sister Dinah, who was still a girl. The men of the place were basely murdered; Dinah was taken out of the palace; the women and children were made slaves, and the spoil of the city seized by the two brothers. Jacob fled in terror to Bethel; but the land was thinly peopled, and there was no pursuit. Remembering the holiness of that place, he ordered all in the encampment to give up the idols and heathen ornaments which they had brought with them from Aram, or acquired at Shechem; and, before setting out on his journey, he buried them under an oak. Another interview with Jehovah is vouchsafed at Bethel; the promise is renewed, and another memorial pillar erected. After staying some time at Bethel, Jacob proceeded leisurely towards the south; Benjamin was born, and Rachel died by the way, and the patriarch reached Hebron in time to bury his father Isaac.—(Gen. xxix.-xxxv.)

22. Jacob resided, after his father's death, in the vale of Hebron or its neighbourhood; but the inspired writer now begins another chapter in the history of this family. Joseph was born some years before Jacob left Aram, and as the boy grew, his brothers were displeased with the fondness shown towards him by their father. Their dislike was turned into hatred by the dreams[1] which he told them, and by the present of a garment,

[1] Either the dreams were related before Rachel's death, in which case Dinah must be included in the eleven stars; or after it, in which case Leah is called the mother of Joseph.

similar to that worn by young princes, which he received from his father.[1] Some years had now elapsed since the slaughter of the Shechemites, and the affair was likely forgotten. The flocks of Jacob were pasturing near Shechem;[2] he himself was living in Hebron with Rachel's two sons. Joseph, then seventeen years of age, was sent to inquire after his brethren's welfare; but they took advantage of the opportunity, and sold him into slavery. How painful must it have been to Joseph to pass within a few miles of his father's tent, perhaps through Hebron itself, a slave on the road to Egypt! The romantic adventures of the youthful captive have never been equalled. Others have risen by sudden changes or by gradual progress from poverty and the lowest rank to wealth and greatness; but no history can rival that of Joseph in faithfulness to God and man, in the wisdom that he displayed, the trials he endured, and the honours with which he was rewarded. After thirteen years of obscurity and suffering, he was made ruler of Egypt, and, when he appeared in public, heralds proclaimed before his chariot, "Bow the knee!" Providence brought his brethren to that country, and the whole family at last removed thither to Goshen or Rameses, the Delta of the Nile. Jacob died there at the advanced age of 147, and Joseph about 50 years after.—(Gen. xxxvii.-l.)

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23. The patriarchal worship was very simple. Images were strictly forbidden, and God was invoked by the name Jehovah, to assure believers of His faithfulness to His promises. He was worshipped as the Possessor of heaven and earth, the only true God, the Judge of the whole earth. It is said in Exodus, that He was not known to the patriarchs by the name Jehovah, but

The words in our version, "the sun, and the moon, and *the* eleven stars, should be "the sun, and the moon, and eleven stars," which removes the difficulty of determining which eleven stars in particular are meant in our version

[1] "A long tunic with sleeves," not of various colours. So Tamar; 2 Sam. xiii. 18.

[2] Perhaps the women and children, whom Simeon and Levi seized in Shechem, had been sold into slavery, or, if still in Jacob's service, had been left at Hebron.

the sacred writer only means that they had not the same experience of his faithfulness as subsequent generations.[1] Circumcision was instituted as a sign and seal of this faithfulness. Altars were built amid groves and on hills, rams were slain for burnt-offerings, oil or wine was poured out in drink-offerings, and at last tithes were given in honour of Jehovah. Prayers were offered for guidance in difficulties, for support amid trials, for deliverance from dangers, and in thanksgiving for blessings. The phrase which expressed this worship was the same as that common before the flood, "to call on the name of Jehovah." Faith in God leading to prompt obedience of all his commands, held a high place in the religion of the patriarchs,—"it was counted for righteousness." Twice the exercise of faith was rewarded with a new name in token of God's approbation—Abraham and Israel. The promise of a great deliverer was now clearer and fuller than at first; he was called the seed of Abraham, the Angel that protected Jacob from all danger, and Shiloh. After the deluge, Noah communicated to his children the promise of a deliverer from the thraldom of the serpent, and the hopes of rest given to the antediluvian Church. He was also inspired to limit the fulfilment of the promise to the family of Shem. In course of years, when idolatry was rapidly overspreading the earth, Jehovah intimated to Abraham that the Deliverer should spring from his family; but the blessings He would bestow should extend *to all the nations of the earth.* The narrowing and the widest extension of the promise were thus revealed at the same time. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob received another promise, however, too important to be overlooked—the possession of Canaan by their descendants. Greater prominence is given to that event in God's interviews with these patriarchs, than to the person or work of the Deliverer. The kernel of the Church's faith had already been revealed; the shell, in which it would be contained till "the fulness of time," was now in course of preparation. A deliverer and rest for all nations were the kernel, Canaan and the Mosaic economy were the shell in which the

[1] Exod. vi. 3.

fruit reached maturity. The former were revealed to Eve chiefly; the latter to the patriarchs entirely. But faith in the Deliverer was still cherished, and became more clear by new revelations in Abraham's family. Jacob was inspired to predict the Saviour's descent from Judah, his kingly office, and its extension over the whole of mankind,—"to him shall be the submission of nations." It was also known that the Deliverer was even then in existence, and actively engaged in promoting the welfare of his people. The original promise was thus slowly narrowing and widening at the same time. It was now limited to one of Jacob's sons; but its fulfilment would be the source of blessings to all men. The Deliverer would be born in Canaan, and yet be a King whose authority would be owned by the whole earth.

24. Several customs prevailed at this time among the Hebrews, which were afterwards embodied in the Mosaic law. The widow of Judah's eldest son was given in marriage to his second son; but if there had been any children, they would have been reckoned to the deceased, not to the living husband; it was the custom of the *Levir*, afterwards laid down in the law of Moses.[1] Adultery was punished with death, even when the guilty woman was a widow. The Sabbath, also, was observed, according to primeval commandment, as we may infer from the peculiar respect attached to the number *seven*. Weeks are repeatedly alluded to in the life of Noah: the child was circumcised on the eighth day after birth, that is, the first day of the second week. Jacob served a week of years for each of his wives; and Abraham confirmed his alliance with Abimelech by a present of seven ewe lambs. Intermarriages with the inhabitants of Canaan were also forbidden, or at least discountenanced, in the families of the patriarchs; but their sons did not always respect this prohibition.

25. The patriarchs enjoyed communications with the unseen world in various ways. Sometimes angels in human form partook of their hospitality, and once at least appeared in vision, revealing the purposes of the Eternal. It is probable, indeed, that

[1] Deut xxv. 5-10.

our Lord himself, the angel of Jehovah so often mentioned, assumed a human shape, and talked with Abram. Visions were also frequently vouchsafed, and the future history of Israel was sometimes minutely revealed.[1]

26. The numerous "tents" or servants owned or hired by the patriarchs, must have made them formidable neighbours to the petty princes of Canaan. They were trained to the use of arms to protect their masters' property from robbers or wild beasts, and the nature of their occupation made them a hardy race. Abraham armed 318 home-born male-servants; and though part of his immense wealth was given to his other sons, there is little doubt that Isaac possessed a much larger number. Jacob brought "two bands" with him from Mesopotamia. They were increased by the spoil of Shechem; and on receiving his share of Isaac's wealth, he must have owned more than 2000 slaves. As these went down with him into Egypt, it is probable that they were incorporated with the Hebrew nation during the sojourn there. Hired servants were sometimes paid with a portion of the young of the flock.

27. The flocks and herds which the patriarchs possessed, compelled them to move from place to place; but in course of time they obtained fixed settlements in Canaan by purchase, or by digging wells, which rendered the neighbouring pastures of value. Abraham encamped at Beersheba, and appears to have claimed the whole district between that well and the valley of Gerar. Isaac not only dwelt in the same place for most of his life, but even brought part of the country under cultivation. Hebron, however, was their principal residence, as well as their burying-ground. The numerous flocks of Jacob made a nomadic life more common with his family. While he resided in the vale of Hebron with some of his sons, the others were in the neighbourhood of Shechem. One of them had a separate establishment in a different part of Canaan. The places rendered sacred by these journeys of the patriarchs, were objects of the highest interest to their descendants. Bethel, Moriah, Shechem, Hebron,

[1] For example, "400 years," in Gen. xv. 13.

and Beersheba, became the centres of faith and history after the conquest.

28. Riches in patriarchal times consisted of slaves, sheep, goats, oxen, asses, and camels, gold and silver. The precious metals were not coined into money, but exchanged for other articles by weight. They were "current with the merchant"[1] either in the form of gold dust, or converted into rings and bars. The shekel of those early times was not a coin, but a weight, and the 100 pieces of money given by Jacob for his possession in Shechem, should rather be rendered 100 weights. It is probable, however, that silver was coined into money either before or during Joseph's residence in Egypt. A flourishing trade was carried on at this time between Egypt and Canaan, and caravans of merchants also travelled from Palestine to Aram.[2] The road to Aram was so well known, that nothing is said about difficulties in finding it, when Abraham's steward, and afterwards Jacob, crossed the desert. Merchants bought and sold slaves,[3] and imported the balsam and spices of Canaan into Egypt. Camels or dromedaries were used in travelling through Palestine and the neighbouring deserts. The Egyptians used horses both in peace and war;[4] but asses were common over all the East.

29. The history of the patriarchs abounds with proofs of the hospitality and politeness that prevailed in their encampment, and through the East generally. When a stranger approached the tent of Abraham, an invitation was immediately given to rest a little and partake of food. Sometimes the traveller required to wait at the well or in the street until some hospitable person invited him to reside in his house. He was then presented with water to wash his feet, and treated to the best the family could afford. Expressions of respect were always used in addressing equals or superiors, and the custom of pretending to give for nothing what would only be parted with for money even then prevailed.[5] The patriarchs ruled their families with sovereign

[1] Gen. xxiii. 16. [2] Gen. xxii. 20. [3] Gen. xvii. 12
[4] Gen. xlix. 17. Horses are only mentioned in the patriarchal history in Jacob's time.
[5] Gen xxiii.

authority; leading them in war, punishing offenders, and discharging the duties of priests. The lot of the slave is never pleasant; and though kindness subsisted between master and servant in the patriarchal encampment, one instance of cruelty, arising from female jealousy, occurs in the case of Hagar. But what master, in countries where slavery prevails, would trust 318 of his servants with arms, and persuade them to peril their lives for a man with whose herdmen they had once quarrelled? Yet Abraham is under no apprehension of treachery or faint-heartedness in these circumstances. His steward also, though a home-born slave, will be his heir in preference to the children of Lot, and is honoured with the important commission of seeking a wife for Isaac.[1] The servants of Jacob assisted Simeon and Levi to revenge their family dishonour by murdering the Shechemites, furnishing another proof of the kindness which knit together master and slave in the families of the patriarchs.

30. Garments are frequently mentioned; but it is difficult to determine from what they were made. Woollen cloth would undoubtedly first suggest itself to inventive genius, though threads, probably of flax, occur in a proverbial saying at an early period.[2] It may be doubted whether the Hebrews wore cotton, for the mummy-cloth of Egypt has been proved to be linen. Leather straps were used to bind sandals of wood or leather on the feet. Men carried a staff with them for ornament or use, and also a seal which was hung round the neck by a string. Golden nose-jewels, weighing one-fifth of an ounce troy, and bracelets of half a pound weight, were worn by ladies of rank. Veils were common among women, though the whole face was not covered; sometimes they were laid aside.

31. The statements made in Genesis regarding Egyptian history and customs, have been curiously verified by the discoveries of the present century. The Pharaohs began to prepare their own tombs immediately on ascending the throne, and years of labour were spent in decorating them with representations of the great events of their reigns. Pictures, on which the paint

[1] Gen. xv. 2, 3. [2] Gen. xiv. 23. The same word occurs in Josh. ii. 18.

is as fresh to-day as it was when applied by the artist, and inscriptions in peculiar characters, but in the Coptic language, record the greatness and triumphs of the Egyptian kings. Tombs, temples, obelisks, and ruined cities are found in all parts of the country : the embalmed bodies of persons of rank and of animals, wrapped up in mummy-cloth, have been preserved to this day, and now grace the museums in most of the capitals of Europe. Baskets, combs, shoes, mirrors, and innumerable articles of household furniture or personal ornament, are also met with, and give a distinct idea of the state of society in ancient Egypt. It appears from Scripture, that the court of Pharaoh, in the times of the patriarchs, was not far from the Isthmus of Suez, for Abraham and Jacob reached it shortly after crossing the desert. It was long thought that the kings of Egypt then resided at Thebes, 300 miles further up the country; but recent investigations have shown this to be a mistake, and have confirmed the account given in Scripture. The monuments also prove that Egyptians shaved their beards, and sometimes their heads, sat at entertainments, and carried loads on their heads—all of them confirmations of Scripture history. Men are represented either wearing necklaces, or committing them to the care of attendant slaves, thus furnishing an illustration of the gold chain put about Joseph's neck. Women are seen in public and private unveiled, and therefore the beauty of Sarah could not escape the notice of Pharaoh's courtiers. Jacob was embalmed according to Egyptian custom, and the period of mourning common in Egypt was observed. Wine was drunk by Pharaoh according to the narrative in Genesis; but an ancient Greek writer says that it was not made in Egypt. The monuments, however, confirm the statements of Moses, for they show the vineyards, the gathering of the vintage, the presses, and the bottling.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

B.C.

2211. Abraham born in Ur. Removes to Haran. Great blessings are promised to him. Gen xii.

2201. Sarah born.

B.C.

2137. Abraham settles in Canaan. God promises it in possession to his descendants.

2125. Sending away of Hagar. Birth of Ishmael.

2112. Renewal of the promises—(1.) "Thou shalt be a father of many nations." (2.) "Kings shall come out of thee." See Gen. xxxvi. 31; Numb. xxiii. 21; Deut. xvii. 14. (3.) "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." (4.) "I will give unto thee and to thy seed . . . Canaan, for an everlasting possession." Hence Joseph's faith in calling Canaan "the land of the Hebrews," when "they were very few, and strangers in it." Gen. xl. 15; Ps. cv. 12.

A covenant was also made:—"Every man-child among you shall be circumcised."

2111. Abraham at Gerar. Treaty at Beersheba.

2111. Moab, Ben-Ammi, and Isaac born.

2077. Death of Terah.

2074. Death of Sarah; age, 127.

2071. Marriage of Isaac and Rebekah.

2051. Birth of Esau and Jacob.

2036. Death of Abraham; age, 175.

2011. Esau marries Judith and Bashemath.

1988. Death of Ishmael; age, 137.

1975. Jacob obtains the blessing:—(1.) A fertile land; (2.) "Let nations bow down to thee;" (3.) "Be lord over thy brethren."

The blessings promised to Abraham are renewed to Jacob at Luz on his journey to Padan-aram.

1969. Jacob marries Leah and Rachel.

1961. Birth of Joseph (probably).

1954. Jacob returns to Canaan.

1947. Slaughter of the Shechemites (probably).

Bethel. Renewal of the promises.

1944. Joseph sold into slavery.

1931. Death of Isaac.

1931. Advancement of Joseph.

1921. Settlement of the Hebrews in Goshen.

1904. Death of Jacob; age, 147.

1851. Death of Joseph; age, 110.

CHAPTER III.

EGYPT AND THE EXODUS.

32. The history of Israel is now transferred to the land of Egypt, and cannot be understood without some allusion to that singular country. Though bounded for several thousand miles on the east and west by sandy deserts, and exposed for nearly two months every year to storms of dust which turn noon into night, the Nile has made it, since the dawn of civilisation, one of the most fertile countries in the world. Except when the sky is darkened by a sand storm, an unclouded sun sheds its fiercest rays upon the soil throughout the whole year. A cloud may sometimes pass across the sky in Lower Egypt, and a shower of rain or hail fall; but, in Upper Egypt, very seldom. About the end of June, the waters of the river begin to rise at Cairo, in consequence of the heavy rains that fall in Abyssinia and Central Africa, where it has its source. The blue colour of the stream suddenly changes to green, and for three or four days the slimy waters are unfit for use. It has always been usual in Egypt to preserve a supply in tanks until the river again becomes wholesome. About ten or twelve days after, the colour of the stream passes to red, but the water may be used with perfect safety. The river continues to rise until the autumnal equinox, and overflows the country on both sides of its course, in some places to a distance of several miles. As it receives no tributary after entering Egypt, and much of the water is evaporated by the intense heat and dryness of the air, the volume of the stream is not nearly so great in the lower as in the upper parts. The quantity of mud also that it carries along gradually diminishes towards the sea. The inundation completely subsides about the end of December (21st), and the richest crops of corn, flax, cotton, onions, beans, melons, grapes, garlic, and cucumbers, then grow on the moist and muddy soil. There are

thus three seasons of four months each in Egypt; July to October for the overflow and subsidence of the Nile; November to February, spring and summer; March to June, harvest. The Hamseen, or wind of the desert, blows for fifty days before the close of harvest, and is succeeded by the Etesian winds from the north, which blow for three or four months, and cool the air during the hottest part of the year.

33. A little below Cairo, and about a hundred miles from the sea, the Nile divides into two branches, which reach the Mediterranean at points as many miles distant from each other in an east and west line. The eastern branch was called the Phathmetic, and the town of Damietta is situated at its mouth; the western was called the Bolbatine branch, and at its mouth is situated the town of Rosetta. It is doubtful if the Nile ever entered the sea by more than these two streams, although ancient writers mention other three or even five branches. This district was anciently called the *Delta*, and is now known as Lower Egypt. On approaching Cairo, or Memphis, in going south, the appearance of the country changes. Instead of level plains stretching away on both banks of the river, its course is hemmed in by mountains of limestone, which for seventy miles are topped on the west with pyramids, and honey-combed with tombs. In one place the high grounds open out into a large valley, running for fifty miles in a north-west direction, and watered by a canal leading from the Nile. It is called the Faioum, and contains a large lake of brackish water; even the Delta does not surpass it in fertility and beauty. The district for 250 miles south of Cairo is called Middle Egypt; and that beyond, as far as the cataracts of Assouan, Upper Egypt.

34. It is now agreed that the first settlements in the country were formed a little farther up the river than the head of the Delta. The great cities, such as Heliopolis (On), and Memphis (Noph), which were built in that neighbourhood, are now heaps of ruins, or have disappeared; and the columns, statues, and obelisks, with which they were once adorned, have long since been broken in pieces, or conveyed to other lands. Ghizeh,

however, with its tombs and pyramids on a shelf of the mountain opposite the site of ancient On, still shows the traveller the state of art, civilisation, and science, in the most remote ages of Egyptian history. The Delta and Upper Egypt were peopled at a later period; and the history of the princes, who ruled over the latter, is written on the monumental stones of Thebes. The land of Goshen, called also the land of Rameses, is generally supposed to have been east of the Delta.

35. The Israelites emigrated from Palestine to Egypt about 1921 B.C., in the reign of Aphophis, and they continued apparently to increase in numbers without molestation till, perhaps, the reign of Sesostris (1575 B.C.) Scripture contains few notices of their condition during this period. One of their principal men was honoured with the hand of Bithiah, a daughter of Pharaoh;[1] and the tribe of Ephraim, at least, sometimes made inroads into the territory of the Philistines, though not always with success.[2] Chaldean wives or concubines were still honoured above others, according to patriarchal commandment.[3] Several families learned the arts for which Egypt was famous: weaving, gardening, and the potter's art are mentioned.[4] The Hebrews also enjoyed their own form of government, and the right of acquiring property, such as houses, fields, or cattle, even during the worst period of bondage. Each tribe was subject to its own prince, assisted by officers called genealogists, who kept the family registers. The elders also met for deliberation, and assembled the tribes when necessary. But at length the rapidly increasing numbers of the Hebrews alarmed the court. They were reduced to slavery; and, after some years of hard bondage, the sanguinary edict was issued that every new-born male child should be thrown into the Nile as a sacrifice to Nu, the god of the river. Aaron was then an infant, and Moses was born a few months after. The edict was too horrible to be obeyed by many, or to be enforced for any length of time; but Moses was only saved from death by the watchful providence of God.

[1] 1 Chron. iv. 18.
[2] 1 Chron. vii. 21.
[3] 1 Chron. vii. 14.
[4] 1 Chron. iv. 21, 23

Brought up in the court of Pharaoh's daughter, he despised the magnificence he might have enjoyed, and cast in his lot with the suffering people of God. Moses was forty years of age,[1] when, acting under a Divine impulse,[2] he attempted to raise the Hebrews against their oppressors; but their spirit was broken by long-continued bondage, and his efforts were repaid with treachery and ingratitude. He escaped death by a hasty flight into the land of Midian, as the peninsula of Mount Sinai was then called; and the second forty years of his life were spent in that retirement.[3]—(Exod. i. ii.)

36. At length the time appointed by God for the deliverance of Israel approached, and Moses was commanded to undertake the work. The angel Jehovah, called also Jehovah and God, appeared in the bush that burned, and was not consumed,[4] and instructed Moses to demand from Pharaoh permission to lead the Hebrews three days' journey into the wilderness, that they might sacrifice to their God. Disappointment had soured his spirit; and he was unwilling to leave Midian. Though fitted to command men by education, as well as natural disposition, and skilled in all the learning then known, he was not an eloquent speaker, and urged that in excuse for declining the duty. But his objection was overruled. Sesostris was now dead, and another prince of inferior abilities swayed the sceptre of Egypt. Accompanied by Aaron, Moses assembled the elders of Israel, and unfolded the commission he had received from Jehovah.[5] The

[1] This division of Moses' life into three periods of forty years each must have been handed down by tradition, for it is only mentioned in the Bible in Acts vii. 23, 30, 36.

[2] Acts vii. 25.

[3] It is highly improbable that Moses made this journey across the desert unaccompanied by any of his friends. He recommended himself to Jethro by interfering on behalf of his daughters at the well; but it is not likely that one man would be able to overawe a number of shepherds. Besides, the narrative in Exodus leaves the impression that communications were kept up between Moses and his relations in Egypt, so that they must have known the place of his retreat.

[4] Galling bondage did not destroy the Hebrews; fierce persecution does not consume the Church.

[5] The Israelites were not yet scattered over the whole land; but were dwelling together in the Delta (they are even called "the people of the land," Exod. v. 5), and this assembly must have been held, when for some reason they had been released for a time from their labours.

news soon spread among the people, that a messenger from God had come to deliver the nation; they ceased from their heavy labours,[1] and crowded to see the wonders that Moses and Aaron were enabled to work. Information of their proceedings reaches the Egyptian court: their names are known to the king, and the priests have time to counterfeit their miracles. At length, accompanied by the elders of Israel, they obtain an interview with Pharaoh, and demand permission, in the name of Jehovah, to lead Israel out of Egypt. The king never heard of the God of Israel before, and haughtily refused their request. He was afraid of the result, if that numerous nation were allowed to enjoy the prospect of deliverance, or a cessation from toil, and issued orders at the end of harvest to scatter them over Egypt, and increase the severity of their bondage.[2] Moses and Aaron were disappointed by these unexpected events, and the Hebrews became deaf to the messages which they received from God. After a time the two brothers again appear before Pharaoh, and prove their Divine authority by turning Aaron's rod into a serpent; but the king would not comply with their demand.[3]—(Exod. iii.-v.)

37. The annual overflow of the Nile had now begun, and, as usual, the king proceeded to mark the progress of the inundation. Moses met him on the bank, and punished his obstinacy by turning the water of the river and the canals into clotted blood. The red Nile no longer furnished its pleasant beverage to the people, and for seven days intense suffering was occasioned throughout the land; but the plague had no effect on Pharaoh. His magicians could do the same, though they could not remove the effects of Moses' curse; and his servants supplied him with palatable water by "digging round about the river." As the

[1] Exod. v. 4.

[2] Exod. v. 5-12. Bricks stamped with the name of the king, in whose reign they were made, are among the curiosities brought from Egypt by the learned. Limestone, sandstone, and granite were also much used in building.

[3] Serpents may be trained to perform a variety of wonderful feats, that of becoming stiff and straight like a rod being one of them. Jannes and Jambres, as the Egyptian priests are called, were prepared with such serpents for the occasion, and confirmed the king in his belief, that the gods of Egypt were more powerful than Jehovah.

waters continue to rise and spread over the country, frogs, whose mournful croakings are not heard during the rest of the year, appear in considerable numbers.[1] They then came forth in countless hosts to annoy and torment; the goddess Buto was unable to drive them away, and a promise was extorted from the king that he would let Israel go. Release from suffering produced a refusal to part with half the strength of his empire; and, to punish this royal treachery, the dust of the land became gnats. This, too, is usual during the overflow: the moisture sets free the swarms of gnats that have been hatched during the heat of summer; but the increase of their numbers and power, in the present instance, was so great that even the priests exclaimed, "It is the finger of God." This plague had no effect on Pharaoh, and a double wonder followed. Flies, which usually make their appearance when the inundation is near its height, attacked him and his people in immense swarms, but they were not seen in the land of Goshen. An unwilling consent is again wrung from Pharaoh, to be soon recalled. Murrain, common at the season when the cattle require to feed knee-deep in water on whatever overtops the inundation, punished this act of deceit: the oxen and sheep, with the horses and camels of the Egyptians, all died; but of the Israelites', not one. Another plague speedily followed: at the bidding of Moses, boils broke out on man and beast; but the heart of Pharaoh still remained hard. About six months after the first plague, a more appalling judgment than any that had yet happened befell Egypt. Storms of rain and hail, accompanied with thunder and lightning, sometimes occur about the end of December, when the barley is in the ear; but now they were so destructive that the crops of barley and flax were destroyed; trees were stripped of their branches or thrown down, men and cattle were killed. (Exod. vi.-ix.)

38. Still further destruction was necessary to humble the pride of Pharaoh. It is mid-winter in northern latitudes; but

[1] "They shall remain in the river only" (Exod. viii. 11),—their usual retreat at this season.

spring in Egypt, when the east winds sometimes blow crowds of locusts to destroy the green and fertile fields of the Nile valley. This plague was threatened, and the courtiers in vain urged the king to avert it by complying with Moses' demands. The locusts came, and soon the greenness of Egypt was blackness. Pharaoh consents, and a west wind drives them into the Red Sea; but the king then returns to his former obduracy. Summer has again visited Egypt, with its heat, and dust, and sand storms; and another occurrence of the season, closes the list of terrible plagues in which Jehovah heightened natural phenomena into miracles. Clouds of fine, hot sand, borne forward by the wind of the desert, swept over the land, darkened the sun, a god of Egypt, shut up the population in their houses for three days, and caused fearful mortality among the people. Such visitations are still common in Egypt,[1] but this was without parallel. Moses was now a greater man in Egypt than the king himself: courtiers and people respected or feared him; but the tyrant regarded him with the bitter hatred of a proud and baffled spirit.[2] Every object which the Egyptians reverenced had been blasted by Jehovah,—every god whom they worshipped had owned the power of this mightier king. The contest between Jehovah and the gods of Egypt had ended in the humiliation of the latter; but Pharaoh would not yield. The last plague fell "upon the heart" of the king and people. The eldest son of every family in the nation was struck dead in one night, and the Israelites were hurried out of the land in the morning, lest their God might slay every surviving Egyptian. Little time would be spent in making preparation to depart; for the king had so often given them permission to leave, that they were now ready to march on the shortest notice. They saw the Egyptians burying their dead, as they passed through the country on their departure. (Exod. xi. xii.)

39. It cannot be supposed that the bondage of the Hebrews, throughout this eventful year, was so severe as at the beginning.

[1] Sometimes these sand storms obscure the air, as if there were a dense fog, to a distance of forty or fifty miles from the coast.

[2] Exod. xi. 3; x. 28.

The first plague would lighten their burdens, if it did not take them away altogether. Pharaoh was obdurate amidst the heaviest calamities; but his servants and officers were terrified, and would not venture to overtask a nation peculiarly under the care of God. The apostle, speaking of God's dealings with this king, says, "whom he will, he hardeneth." It should be also borne in mind, that Pharaoh abused the light he had; for his servants and magicians saw that he was engaged in an impious contest.

40. The Hebrews demanded permission to go three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice to Jehovah. Moses and Aaron refused to go, unless old and young, with their cattle and all they possessed, accompanied them. It was evident that the same God who commanded them to take this step, might also command them not to return; and Pharaoh understood this. By acknowledging Jehovah's right to remove them from Egypt when he pleased, he also allowed his right to keep them from returning.[1] For the same reason, the Egyptians must have understood that there was no prospect of recovering the jewels which they lent the Hebrews. It was most unlikely that the Israelites would ever return to bondage. Besides, every possession of the Egyptians belonged to the king: he had exacted labours from the Hebrews without giving them wages; but now Jehovah interferes on behalf of the injured, and gives them favour in the sight of Pharaoh's servants. The jewels they received were therefore the wages of eighty years' service.

41. The fugitives were accompanied by a band of strangers or aliens, called the *mixed multitude*, in whom it is not difficult to recognise men of neither pure Hebrew nor pure Egyptian descent.[2] As inheriting Israelitish blood, they had no caste in Egypt; but were the most degraded and abused members of the community. They preferred to share the fortunes of the Hebrews, even as "hewers of wood and drawers of water," and

[1] When God first appeared to Moses, he told him, *first*, that the nation would get possession of Palestine: and *second*, to demand permission to leave on a three days' journey.

[2] Lev. xxiv. 10; Numb. xi. 4, contain notices of them.

provision was afterwards made by God for their incorporation with the people.[1]

42. The time spent by the Israelites in Egypt was 430 years, and eighty at least were passed in grievous bondage. In Genesis this period is called four generations, allowing, as it was usual to do in Abraham's time, one hundred years to each. The genealogies of several tribes[2] show only a few descents during this long interval; but that of Ephraim contains eighteen. There is no doubt that five or six descents are too few for the interval, and that eighteen is the exact number. It was usual, indeed, with the Israelites to shorten their quotations from family registers; Matthew leaves out the names of three kings, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, from his genealogy of our Lord, and the descents between Salmon and David in the Book of Ruth, are manifestly too few. Paul also alludes to this interval when he says "that the covenant, that was confirmed of God in Christ, the law, which was 430 years after, cannot disannul."[3] It appears from the Book of Genesis, that the covenant originally made with Abraham was confirmed to Jacob[4] at Beersheba, when quitting Palestine for Egypt. It is that confirmation of the covenant, the last and most peculiar before the giving of the law, which Paul means; not the first promise made to Abraham, 215 years earlier.

43. The notices given in Scripture of the state of religion among the Hebrews, during their residence in Egypt, are not numerous. Jehovah was worshipped as the God of all: the promises made to their ancestors were not forgotten, and the bones of Joseph were carefully preserved. But their morals were debased, and their faith obscured by compliance with Egyptian customs. Idolatry, and the evil practices common in Egyptian worship,[5] had been introduced; apis or the bull, devils or goats,[6] as the word should be translated, were worshipped; and, even in the wilderness, the presence of Jehovah himself did not deter them from carrying about images of

[1] Deut. xxiii. 7, 8. [2] 1 Chron. ii. 3-10. [3] Gal. iii. 17.
[4] Gen. xlvi. 1-4. [5] Ezek. xxiii. 3. [6] Lev. xvii. 7.

heathen gods.[1] Sacrifices were offered to these deities in the outskirts of the camp, and a law was passed, forbidding that evil practice under pain of death.[2]

44. The encampments of the Israelites on their march from Rameses to Horeb, their dangers, deliverances, and rebellions, are narrated in Exod. xii. 37-39; xiii. 17-xix. 2. In Exod. xii. 40-51; xiii. 3-10, the passover is again introduced, and some additional regulations regarding strangers laid down; while in xiii. 1, 2, 11-16, the first-born of man and beast are declared holy to Jehovah. These appear to have been proclamations, which Moses issued to the army before leaving Rameses; the former to remind them that, though solemnly separated to the service of Jehovah, they were not to regard other nations as more unclean or less worthy than themselves; the latter to teach them that Jehovah was entitled to the highest place in their regards, and could justly claim whatever they reckoned most valuable.

45. The principal places at which Israel encamped on this journey, after leaving Rameses, were the following:—

Succoth, east from Rameses.

Etham, edge of the wilderness; first mention of the pillar of fire.

Between the sea and Migdol (the tower), perhaps one of the border fortresses built to protect the eastern frontier of Egypt from invasion. Pharaoh was thus behind them, and these fortresses were in front. Therefore they turned south, according to the Divine command. "Pillar of cloud" is now called the "Angel of God."—Ex. xiv. 19. See xxiii. 20-25.

Passage of the Gulf of Suez, the western branch of the Red Sea.

Marah (bitterness). Murmuring of the people for water.

Elim. Special notice taken of the twelve wells and seventy palms, because there were twelve tribes of Israel, and seventy persons accompanied Jacob into Egypt.

Wilderness of Sin. Thirty-first day after leaving Rameses;

[1] Amos v. 25, 26. [2] Lev. xvii. 1-7.

the people murmur for want of flesh and bread; quails and manna sent; the Sabbath is revived.

Rephidim (Massah, Meribah). Another rebellion for want of water, and Moses almost stoned. Pillar of cloud at length rests on the rock of Horeb,[1] and water is furnished. Battle with an Amalekite tribe in the neighbourhood; and first mention of *the book*, in which events were recorded.

Arrival of Jethro (Reuel, or Raguel).

Sinai. The people arrive two months after leaving Egypt (1491 B.C.)

46. It appears from the story of Jethro (Exod. xviii.), that Moses taught the people God's "statutes and laws" before they encamped at Sinai. Possibly some of the numerous laws relating to matters between man and man, which are contained in the books of Exodus and Leviticus, arose out of circumstances that happened on the march from Egypt to Sinai. In a host so numerous as that of Israel, and composed of men just escaped from a state of slavery, mistakes and crimes of every sort would be committed. Laws and customs also, besides those inherited from their ancestors, must have grown up among them during their sojourn in Egypt, which it was desirable either to confirm or root out.[2] Men of tender consciences would propose doubtful points to their great leader; immoral or criminal actions would be brought under his notice. God would always be consulted on these matters, and a considerable number of laws would thus be promulgated, before the people reached Sinai. Several instances of laws formed in this manner are recorded in the Pentateuch; but it was not the intention of the lawgiver to narrate the circumstances that called forth all his laws.[3] Hence these laws were most appropriately termed "judgments" or decisions of

[1] Exod. xvii. 6

[2] Hence many of the Mosaic laws are expressly directed against their doings in Egypt.

[3] Thus, it was found that if female heirs were allowed to marry into other tribes than their own, the possessions of the tribes could not be kept separate. Hence a law was passed thirty-eight years after leaving Sinai, requiring them to marry in the tribe of their father. (Numb. xxxvi.)

Jehovah, as if God himself had sat on the judgment-seat. These decisions were recorded in *the book* which Moses was commanded to keep; and as there would be comparatively little order in the cases brought before him, an arrangement of crimes and misdemeanours under different heads cannot be looked for in the Pentateuch. This is true, however, principally of laws relating to matters "between man and man,"[1] and not even of the whole of these. In the Pentateuch, therefore, we may expect to find laws of the following nature:—(1.) Ancient customs, handed down from generation to generation; (2.) Corrections of evil habits, which sprung up during a century of debasing bondage; (3.) Scruples of conscience[2] in men still ignorant of the truth; and (4.) New laws and appointments, relating to worship and life. All these laws, however, were sanctioned by Jehovah.

47. The interview of the seventy elders of Israel with God, is related in Exod. xxiv. Perhaps the Hebrews retained this number in remembrance of their seventy ancestors, who settled in Egypt, and from whom they were all descended. There is nothing else in history to which it can be traced, and the eagerness with which the people remark the twelve wells and seventy palms at Elim, is a good instance of their remembrance of Jacob's settlement in Goshen. Directions are given for constructing the ark and tabernacle in xxv.-xxxi. The story of the golden calf, and the death of three thousand men, is related in chap. xxxii. Aaron escaped death only by the intercession of Moses. The construction and erection of the tabernacle, xxxv.-xl.

[1] Exod. xviii. 16.

[2] "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk;" "take the young from a bird's nest, but let the dam go," and such like, arose, perhaps, from these scruples of conscience.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LAWS OF MOSES.

48. The people of Israel stood in a peculiar relation to Jehovah. They solemnly accepted him at Sinai as their king, and promised obedience to his voice. A faithful discharge of this duty would be rewarded with the highest blessings; they would become "his peculiar people," "a kingdom of priests,[1] and an holy nation," that is, a nation set apart to the service of God. According to the terms of this covenant, Moses taught that the people possessed no property of their own. Jehovah spared them amid the plagues of Egypt; gave them favour in the eyes of their oppressors; loaded them with riches on leaving Goshen; and, at last, established them in Canaan. They are, therefore, called sojourners or strangers with God, living like guests in the dwellings that he provided; and having no right to complain of any burdens he might impose on them. Tithes and sacrifices, the presence of all the males thrice every year before the ark, the years of rest for the land, and a prohibition of usury from their brethren, were among the chief. But, further, it was also laid down that no important step in affairs of state should be taken without consulting God; if magistrates ventured to act on their own view of matters, disgrace and misfortune would be the result. Every mistake or crime that was committed in the community, was committed against Jehovah, and required to be expiated by blood. What a human magistrate would have passed over, God could not; and the Hebrews were thus taught to regard themselves as always under the eye of their ever-watchful King.

49. *The Priests and Levites.*—When the law was given on Mount Sinai, the tribe of Levi was specially set apart to the

[1] It is evident that the Levitical priesthood was not ordained when these blessings were promised. See Exodus xix. 22.

service of God. It had been foretold that its members would be "divided in Jacob, and scattered in Israel;" and their appointment to the sacred office of God's ministers led to this result. When the people were numbered in the plains of Sinai, it was found that all the first-born males in the nation, excluding the tribe of Levi, amounted to 22,273. These, as well as the first-born of every beast in the camp, belonged to Jehovah, for he spared them when the plague fell "on the heart" of Egypt. They required, therefore, to be devoted to his service or redeemed, and accordingly the Levites were substituted in place of the men-children, and rules laid down for disposing of the first-born of the flocks and herds.[1] The former were afterwards redeemed for five shekels each. The descendants of Aaron were usually called *priests*, but sometimes *Levites;* the rest of the tribe *Levites*. The former discharged the sacred duties of blessing the people, sacrifice, and attendance in the tabernacle; the latter carried the tabernacle and its furniture from place to place, chanted the sacred hymns of the temple after it was built, guarded the tabernacle or temple night and day, and taught the people out of the law. Provision was made for their support in various ways. Aaron and his sons received certain portions of every offering that was not wholly consumed, the first-fruits of fields and flocks, and a tenth of the tithe annually paid to Jehovah by the people. The Levites were supported by the remainder of this tithe, and forty-eight cities, with part of the surrounding country, were set aside for their use, and that of the priests. The people were also exhorted to give free-will offerings occasionally; and were strongly encouraged to remember their Levitical brethren in feasts and sacrifices.[2] A second tithe of the produce of their fields and flocks required to be eaten before the tabernacle; but at the end of three years they were allowed to consume it at home. Levites, widows, strangers, and the fatherless were invited to the rejoicings common on these occasions.[3]

50. *The High Priest.*—The high priest was the lineal descend-

[1] Lev. xxvii. 26, 27. [2] Deut. xii. 19; xiv. 27. [3] Deut. xiv. 22-29.

ant of Aaron, and occupied the highest position in the nation in religious and sometimes even in civil affairs. He alone was permitted to enter the most holy place, and that only on the Day of atonement. On the same day, he made a confession of all the known and unknown sins of the nation, and solemnly entreated the forgiveness of God. His dress, except on this occasion, consisted of a wide blue robe reaching to his feet, with golden bells round the lower border; a richly embroidered ephod or vest; the breastplate, a square bag inserted in a space left open in the ephod, and set with twelve precious stones, on which the names of the twelve tribes were engraved; and a lofty mitre of fine linen upon his head. The high priest was regarded with peculiar reverence. He was not allowed to mourn over the death of relatives, or to visit the house in which a dead body was lying. He was permitted to take only a virgin Israelitess for his wife. Wine and strong drink were forbidden to him and the other priests, at least when they waited at the altar. The high priest was also a type of our Saviour in making intercession for the people on the day of atonement.

51. *The Tabernacle.*—While Moses was on the mount, he received particular directions regarding the buildings and vessels to be used in the worship of Jehovah. Nothing was left to his own judgment, for a pattern of everything afterwards made was shown to him by God. In the first place the tabernacle and ark were constructed, and as they are constantly referred to, a brief description of them will be of advantage. The tabernacle was thirty cubits long from east to west, about ten broad, and as many high. Its sides were made of boards of acacia wood, overlaid with gold, and could be taken down or set up at pleasure; four long curtains of wool, leather, and linen, adorned with figures of cherubim, and of various colours, were drawn over the top and nearly covered the sides. The tabernacle was divided into two parts by a richly embroidered linen veil. The front, or eastern part,[1] was called *the holy place*, the other the *most holy*. So holy

[1] The entrance to the tabernacle was from the east, for the west end was boarded up (Exodus xxvi. 22-25), and a curtain was provided for the east end (xxvi. 36, 37).

was even the approach to the tabernacle esteemed, that Moses and Aaron were ordered to put to death every stranger who ventured near the door. A table on which twelve loaves of bread, renewed weekly,[1] were constantly lying, stood on the north side of the holy place; a golden candlestick of massive workmanship on the south. The altar of incense, and several vessels required for the table and candlestick, completed the furniture of this apartment. The tabernacle stood in a court, one hundred cubits long from east to west, and fifty broad. Curtains of fine linen, suspended from pillars rising five cubits above the ground, formed the boundary of this court. The only altar at which the Hebrews were allowed to offer sacrifice was placed here. It was a box of acacia wood, five cubits square on the top, and filled with earth. Although the people were forbidden to sacrifice elsewhere, the law was not obeyed; for another law was afterwards passed, commanding them not to sacrifice to Moloch and other heathen gods on the outskirts of the camp.

52. *The Ark.*—The ark was a little box of acacia wood, two cubits and a half long, and one and a half in its other dimensions. It was covered inside and out with gold. The top, called the *mercy-seat*, was made entirely of that metal, and was sprinkled with blood once every year. Two cherubim, figures which are variously described in Scripture, sat on the mercy-seat, and their outstretched wings formed, as it were, the throne of Jehovah. The ark contained only the two tables of the law; the golden pot of manna, Aaron's rod, and a copy of the Books of Moses were afterwards placed before or beside it. It was laid up in the most holy place of the tabernacle; and when the encampment was changed, the high priest and his sons were commanded carefully to conceal it from the public gaze by coverings of rich cloths. Many articles used in the service of the tabernacle were fitted with rings, into which carrying-staves could be inserted when the people were ordered to march. Other articles were put into waggons drawn by oxen. The family of the Kohathites

[1] Called in Hebrew *bread of the face* or *presence*; hence our phrase *shew-bread*.
[2] Num. vii. 3-8.

usually bore the ark, the altars, and table of shew-bread by staves, inserted into rings on their sides; and death was denounced against all, except the priests, who should venture to touch the ark. On solemn occasions the priests carried the ark themselves.

53. *Sacrifices.*—Some sacrifices were offered at stated times, such as the morning and evening sacrifice, those at the new moons, and solemn feasts. Others were only offered occasionally, when sins had been committed, or gratitude for God's goodness was expressed. The animals used in sacrifices were the ox, sheep, goat, and any clean birds, but generally doves. Libations of wine, cakes, and meal, were also offered. When a person offered an animal in sacrifice, he laid his hand on its head, and killed it himself, in ancient times; and the priest sprinkled the blood on the horns of the altars of burnt-offering and incense. Four kinds of sacrifice are mentioned:—(*a.*) The *burnt-offering*, for the nation or an individual, in which the whole of the animal was burnt, especially in times of great solemnity or sin. (*b.*) The *peace* or *thank-offering*, by which a person showed his gratitude for God's goodness, when the fat parts only were burnt upon the altar, and the rest eaten by the offerer and priest. (*c.*) The *sin-offering*, for *sins of ignorance* chiefly, in which the same parts were burned, and the remainder became the property of the priests; it was offered for an individual or the people generally. (*d.*) The *trespass-offering*, for wilful sins, in which the same ceremonies were observed as in the sin-offering. If a person was too poor to offer an ox or a sheep, he was allowed to offer a pair of doves; and if these were beyond his means, he might substitute a small measure of flour. When sin-offerings were presented for the whole nation, the high priest or the elders put their hands on the animal's head. Sometimes the sacrifice required to be a male, at others a female: it was commanded in all cases, however, to be without blemish.

54. *Feasts.*—The feasts of the Jews occurred weekly, monthly, yearly, once in seven years, and once in fifty. The *Sabbath-day* was the weekly festival. It was given to Adam in Paradise;

occasional notices of it are found in Genesis; and it was again given to Israel in the wilderness. Double sacrifices were offered in the tabernacle or temple on the Sabbath; and in later times the people assembled in the synagogues for public worship. The *new moon* was the monthly feast. The priests appear to have watched the first appearance of the moon each month, and the blowing of trumpets indicated the beginning of the feast. Four yearly festivals are mentioned in the law of Moses; afterwards there were six: (1.) The Passover, which continued seven days after the 15th of Abib, commemorated the *passing over* of the Israelites by the angel, when the first-born of Egypt were slain. The Hebrews called it Pascha, *sparing*. It typified the sparing of believers from the general doom of mankind, and the death of Christ, by which their safety was secured.[1] The first ripe sheaves of the barley harvest were offered at the Passover. (2.) The *Feast of Weeks*, following seven times seven days after the Passover. Its Greek name was Pentecost, fiftieth, because it happened on the fiftieth day after the first Sabbath of the Passover. Loaves made of the first-fruits of wheat-harvest were presented at this feast. (3.) The *Feast of Tabernacles* or *Ingathering*, which was celebrated for eight days in the month Tishri, after the vintage and all the fruits of the ground were safely housed. During this feast the Hebrews lived in booths made of branches of trees,[2] to commemorate their sojourn in the wilderness.[3] In our Lord's days, many persons perhaps lived on the slopes of Olivet, and in the fields around Jerusalem at this feast.[4] The eighth day was then reckoned the most important. All the males of the nation above twenty years of age required to present themselves before Jehovah in Shiloh or Jerusalem, at these three feasts; and business was laid aside, after the captivity at least, some time before they commenced.[5] (4.) *The Feast of Trumpets*, held on the first of Tishri, to celebrate the commencement of the civil year. (5.) *The Day*

[1] "Christ our passover," 1 Cor. v. 7.

[2] The palm, olive, oleaster, and myrtle from Mount Olivet are specially mentioned, Neh. viii. 15.

[3] They did not do so in Palestine af er Joshua's time; Neh. viii. 17.

[4] John vii. 2; viii. 1.

[5] John vi. 1-4; xii. 1-12.

of Atonement (10th Tishri), celebrated five days before the feast of tabernacles. This was the only stated *fast*[1] among the Hebrews: it was a day of repentance and sorrow. The high priest made atonement for the whole nation, and sprinkled the mercy-seat with the blood of a goat on that day. After the captivity, other two feasts were introduced: (1.) The *Feast of Purim*, or *Lots* (14th and 15th Adar), to commemorate the deliverance of the Jews from the conspiracy of Haman;[2] and, (2.) *The Feast of the Dedication* (25th Kislev), held for eight days, to commemorate the dedication of the temple, in 164 B.C., after its profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes.

55. Every seventh year was a year of rest, or a Sabbatic year, to the land. Ploughing, sowing, pruning, and all out-door work in the fields ceased. Proprietors were not allowed to gather the spontaneous produce of their own grounds; but it was made free to all. During the feast of tabernacles this year, the law was read to the assembled people. The faithful observance of this festival was rewarded with a sixth year's harvest sufficiently abundant to supply food for two years. Every fiftieth year was a still more solemn season—the Jubilee. The year immediately preceding was a Sabbatic year, and the fields were unsown. In the jubilee, also, the operations of the husbandman were suspended; and, for two years in succession at this season, no crops were taken from the land. This facilitated the transfer of lands which then took place. Every field alienated from a family for debt, or sold, was restored, and every Hebrew slave was set free; but there would have been greater difficulty in handing over the land, and releasing the servant, if the out-going proprietor had sown the ground, or required the labour of his slave as before. Houses in agricultural villages, but not in fortified towns, were also restored. Neglect of these years of rest was one of the grievous sins charged upon the Jews by the prophets. The other feasts appear to have been observed down to the end of the monarchy; and references are not uncommon to the appearance

[1] Acts xxvii. 9.

[2] The 14th was the fast of Esther; the 15th the feast of Purim.

of the highways, crowded with travellers, hastening to Shiloh or Jerusalem.[1]

56. *Magistrates.*—During the residence of the Hebrews in Egypt, it is probable that justice was administered by their elders or heads of tribes at first, and the officers set over them by Pharaoh afterwards.[2] But, on the march from the Red Sea to Sinai, every case, however trifling, was carried before Moses; and he took advantage of this to enforce existing laws, or to establish better. On the recommendation of Jethro, however, sanctioned by the approval of God, he appointed judges of tens, hundreds, and thousands; and confined himself to appeals or difficult cases. The appointment of these officers shows that the authority of the princes of tribes, the heads of families, and the genealogists or keepers of family registers, was not respected at that time. Moses restored them to their proper places in the nation, by selecting most of the judges from their ranks, by communicating the commands of Jehovah through them to the people, and by consulting them on matters left to his own discretion. The Council of Seventy, which was appointed to share the responsibility of unpopular measures with Moses, and to inspire the people with confidence in his integrity, was composed of the seventy elders of the people. Sometimes the whole body of judges and other officers assembled in the court of the tabernacle, to receive the commands of Jehovah. On other occasions, the principal rulers only were summoned. The great political gatherings at Gilgal, Mizpeh, and other places, after the conquest, were undoubtedly composed chiefly of the nobles and inferior magistrates. The courts of tens, hundreds, and thousands were then abolished, and judges appointed to each town or district; an appeal or a difficulty being carried to the judge of the nation and the high priest.[3] Ultimately the king became the chief judge; and directions for his guidance had been laid down beforehand in the law of Moses.[4] Petitions were presented to him craving justice; appeals were brought before him in the

[1] Judges v. 6; Ps. lxxxiv. 6, 7; Isa. ii. 3; Lam. i. 4.
[2] Exod. v. 14.
[3] Deut. xvii. 8-13; Ezra vii. 25.
[4] Deut. xvii. 14-20.

metropolis, and even petty matters were carried to him at once. Judges and kings at first administered justice in the gate of the city, the place of concourse; but Solomon, for greater state, erected the throne of judgment in a magnificent palace built for that purpose.

57. *Punishments.*—Capital punishment was inflicted among the Hebrews for a gross violation of any commandment of the Decalogue, except the last two. The criminal was stoned to death,[1] or thrust through with the sword.[2] Sometimes the dead body was exposed on a tree for greater ignominy; but the law required it to be cut down before sunset.[3] In other cases it was burned,[4] or a heap of stones raised over it. Fines, scourging, the stocks, ceremonial observances, and excommunication, were the other punishments common among the Hebrews; imprisonment is not mentioned in the law, but it gradually came into use towards the end of the monarchy.[5] Theft was punished with restitution of double, or even five times the value of the article stolen; unless it was something devoted to destruction, when the thief was put to death. Scourging was inflicted on the back of the criminal with a rod, as soon as sentence was pronounced.[6] In course of time a three-fingered lash, armed with iron points, and called a scorpion, was employed; and thirteen strokes with it stood for forty with the rod.[7] It was forbidden to give more than forty lashes.

58. *Debtors.*—The Mosaic law encouraged the Hebrews to lend money to their brethren, and forbade interest to be taken, except from foreigners. Pledges for debt were allowed, but limitations were imposed to prevent this right from becoming burdensome to the poor.[8] No debt could be exacted during the Sabbatic year, because the ground was then untilled; and, after the captivity, there was a general cancelling of debts at the Jubilee.

[1] Lev. xx. 10; Ezek. xvi. 38-40. [2] Judg. viii. 21; 1 Kings ii. 25, 29, 34.

[3] This law was broken when the bodies of Saul's descendants were exposed for five months. 2 Sam. xxi. 10.

[4] It seems doubtful whether the person was first stoned and then burnt, or burnt only; probably both customs obtained. Lev. xxi. 9; Josh. vii. 25; Judg. xv. 6.

[5] It was practised amongst the Egyptians, however. [6] Deut. xxv. 1, 2.

[7] 1 Kings xii. 14. [8] Exod. xxii. 25, 26.

At other times the creditor might sell the land of his debtor, and if enough was not realized, he might sell the man himself, his wife and children, into slavery. After seven years' service, or at the Jubilee, if it occurred before the seven years expired, they were restored to liberty.

59. *Cities of Refuge.*—When a man killed his neighbour designedly or by accident, the nearest male relative of the murdered person was bound, in public estimation, to take blood for blood. In all eastern nations, the feuds arising from this pernicious custom have proved most injurious to the interests of society. Moses did not abolish the practice, but materially modified it. Six cities, three on the east and three on the west side of Jordan, were named Cities of Refuge for persons who killed their neighbours accidentally or in self-defence. Roads, kept in repair by public authority, led to them from all parts of the country; and if the man-slayer reached one of them, the avenger of blood, as the next of kin was called, could not legally put him to death. The magistrates of the city to which the unfortunate man had fled detained him until a meeting of the congregation, that is the rulers, was held, when his case was discussed. It does not appear that he was brought before this tribunal unless the elders of his native city had reason to suspect his innocence. If found guilty of premeditated murder, he was put to death by the avenger of blood; if the deed was proved to be accidental, he was delivered up to the magistrates of the city of refuge, and conducted back in safety. So long as he continued within its walls, he was safe from the avenger of blood; and, on the death of the high priest, he could return to his family.[1]

60. *Vows.*[2]—The Hebrews had been accustomed, from the earliest times, to devote themselves, or part of their property, to the service of God. Moses found this custom prevailing amongst them, and neither sanctioned nor forbade it. A law was passed, however, requiring all persons of competent judgment who made a vow, to fulfil it under pain of the displeasure of Jehovah. Regulations were also laid down for the guidance of the priests in

[1] Num. xxxv. 9-35. [2] Lev. xxvii. 1-29; Num. vi. 1-21, 30.

estimating the value of any property devoted by vow to the service of God. It appears from these, that persons consecrated themselves,[1] land, houses, money, and animals, clean or unclean. Houses and land thus consecrated became the property of the priests until the jubilee. Sometimes, however, the owners wished to recover possession before that time, or even not to part with them at all. In such cases, the priests valued the land or houses, added a fifth part, and then allowed the proprietor to redeem them by payment of the money. Any trifling with the solemnity of a vow was punished by the forfeiture of the land to the priests. Clean beasts were sacrificed; unclean beasts were sold or redeemed by the offerer. Men and women voluntarily came under obligations of various kinds. If they consecrated themselves to the Lord, they were bound to serve at the tabernacle, or they might pay the price of redemption fixed by the priests. "The women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation"[2] were, most likely, persons bound by this vow to a life of fasting and prayer.[3] In other cases, they vowed to let the hair grow and abstain from certain articles of food for a time or for life. Persons under this vow were called Nazarites[4] (separated ones). It was also usual, especially after seasons of sickness or adversity, to abstain from wine, to go with the head shaven, and to spend thirty days in prayer before offering sacrifices. The Canaanites and other nations were devoted to God by a peculiar vow, called *Cherem* (*accursed thing*). Men, cattle, cities, and personal property were given up by it to utter destruction; but in some cases the cattle and other spoils were spared.[5]

61. *War.*[6]—All the Hebrew men between twenty and fifty years of age were liable to be called out for military service; but several exceptions were allowed by the law. When the levies were assembled, the genealogists (officers) granted exemption from service to the following classes:—

(1.) All who had built a house, and not inhabited it.

1 "Made a singular vow" in our version. Lev. xxvii. 2.
2 Exod. xxxviii. 8; 1 Sam. ii. 22.
3 Luke ii. 36, 37.
4 Properly *Nazirites*, not *Nazarites*.
5 Deut. ii. 34, 35.
6 Deut. xx.

(2.) All who had planted a garden, and not eaten of it.

(3.) All who had betrothed a wife, but not married her;[1] and

(4.) All who were faint-hearted.

Captains were then appointed by the genealogists to the various divisions of the army; though, probably, the power of selecting these officers was limited by established custom. The Hebrew soldiers fought on foot; cavalry and chariots were not permitted in their armies. Before engaging with the enemy, the soldiers were encouraged by the priests to lay aside all fears, and put their trust in Jehovah, however formidable the array opposed to them might seem. Foreign conquests were not forbidden in the law. On the contrary, rules were laid down for the guidance of the Hebrews in such cases.[2] Peace was first offered to a besieged city. If the inhabitants submitted, their lives were spared, and they became tributaries; if not, every male was put to death, the women and children were carried into slavery, and the cattle seized for a prey. These rules did not apply, however, to the nations of Canaan, which were all doomed to utter destruction.

62. *Diviners.*—The Hebrews were strongly exhorted by Moses to beware of pretenders to a knowledge of futurity, or the unseen world. Many of them existed among the Canaanites, and are classed in the law among the abominations of these nations.[3] *Diviners* was a name applied by the sacred writers to all false prophets, Hebrew or foreign, and to evokers of the dead. *An observer of times* should be rather one who practised hidden arts (magic), or drew his inferences from the clouds. *Enchanters* drew their omens from serpents; and the *witch* of our version should perhaps be *astrologer*. The *charmer* pretended that he could render serpents harmless by incantations. If he failed, the serpent was said to be deaf.[4] *Persons with familiar spirits* and *wizards* (necromancers) taught people to consult the dead, and were punished with death by stoning, under the Mosaic economy.[5] They spoke out of the ground, and slowly delivered their communications in a low voice, or peeped like a chicken. They appear indeed to

[1] Ten or twelve months usually elapsed between the betrothal and the marriage.
[2] See Deut. xx. 10-19. [3] Deut. xviii. 10, 11. [4] Ps. lviii. 4, 5. [5] Lev. xx. 27.

have deceived those who hired them by means of ventriloquism. Saul cut off as many of these necromancers as he could discover, but the anxiety of people to pry into the future perpetuated the deceit.

63. *General character of the Mosaic Law.*—If the character of a nation may be learned from its laws, the code of Moses proves beyond doubt that a very high degree of civilisation and refinement existed among the Hebrews 3300 years ago. In the first place, kindness and forbearance are repeatedly inculcated. Pledges were allowed to be taken, but if they were parts of clothing essential to the comfort of a person during night, they could not be retained beyond sunset. Slaves were treated as human beings; torture was unknown; and cursing the deaf, or putting a stumblingblock in the way of the blind, was strictly forbidden. The Hebrews were also commanded to treat strangers with kindness in remembrance of their own sojourn in Egypt, and "because Jehovah loveth the stranger."[1] But, further, the Mosaic law did not allow this highly favoured people to suppose that they were more deserving than other nations. It taught them quite the opposite, though they forgot these precepts or explained them away after the captivity. The law also insisted on strict justice being done to every one; first to Jehovah the King of Israel, and then to men. Tithes required to be paid without grumbling, sacrifices of the best of the flock or herd to be offered, and every religious duty observed. In matters between man and man, the poor and fatherless were not to be favoured, as if that were well-pleasing to Jehovah; nor was injustice to be done them, for God would avenge their cause. Strict impartiality was commanded in all the affairs of life. A religious sanction also is attached to every precept—"Just balances, just weights shall ye have: I am the Lord your God which brought you out of the land of Egypt."[2] Every man was always under the watchful eye of the Almighty; and his unjust deeds would be visited, even in this life, with the Divine displeasure. Temporal punishment, however, did not in all cases thus

[1] Deut. x. 18. [2] Lev. xix. 36.

overtake the sinner, nor was that intended; but the threatening was pronounced, and his life would be spent in terror. Temporal blessings, again, were promised as the reward of obedience; but the two were not necessarily linked together in the case of individuals. Who obeyed more cheerfully than Moses? on whom was higher praise bestowed by Jehovah? and yet whose sorrows were so heavy, whose toils so great, whose temporal blessings so few? Worldly prosperity was not more generally the reward of an upright life under the law than it is under the gospel. The Psalmist repeatedly stumbled at the happiness of the wicked, and the misfortunes of the righteous in this life; but his doubts were removed when he considered their end.[1] National prosperity, however, was unquestionably promised as the reward of national faithfulness; but this is very different from individual prosperity. The law linked the former to obedience; only a general promise of happiness, to which there might be many exceptions, was made to individuals.

64. The Divine origin of the Mosaic economy is best proved from the views it furnishes of the nature and attributes of God. While other nations were worshipping the powers of nature, the beasts of the field, or dead men, the Hebrews were taught to serve Jehovah as the Almighty Maker of all things, the Sovereign Disposer of every event, the Judge of the whole earth. One God and Father of all, whose providential care reaches the lowest of his creatures, formed the fundamental maxim of Hebrew law: "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord." The heathen bowed themselves down to stocks and stones; but Moses taught that no figure, shaped by human hands, can represent the unseen and ever-present Jehovah. Besides inculcating the unity and providence of God, the Hebrew lawgiver also maintained, what man's unaided understanding can scarcely conceive, the self-existence of the Divine Being. Dependent on none, but Maker and Lord of all, Jehovah "doeth according to his will among the armies of heaven, and the inhabitants of the earth." Other nations clothed their deities with the passions and frailties of man; poets

[1] Ps. lxxiii.

sung of their doings, and philosophers made a jest of their mistakes or crimes. But God, according to Moses, "is not man, that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent." In many nations of antiquity, wickedness was sanctioned by law or custom, even in the temples of the gods; but there is no stain on the sublime moral code of the Hebrews contained in the Decalogue. Moses, therefore, introduced not only more exalted views of the Divine nature than any then existing in the world; but also the only moral code which man's understanding can recognise. But there is another attribute of God to which deserved prominence is given in the law: "Jehovah thy God is a consuming fire, a jealous God." It was not a matter of indifference to him whether people kept or broke his laws: he required the heart and life to be devoted to his service. But the Hebrews were far from regarding God as a hard taskmaster, watching every slip on their part, and ready to inflict punishment. On the contrary, they read in the law and knew by experience, that He is a merciful God to those who repent of their evil ways, and believe in the reality of his promises or threatenings.

65. *The Saviour revealed in the Law.*—The whole economy of Moses was a system of types and shadows. The punishment of the sinner—death—was borne by the irrational creature offered in sacrifice: the sins of the offerer, whether an individual or the nation, were solemnly laid on the head of the victim, suggesting the idea of *a bearer of guilt.* A sin might be committed in ignorance, but it could only be washed away in blood. It was evident, however, that neither the bulls nor goats offered on the altar could take away guilt. All the sacrifices of the law, therefore, all those ceremonies in which blood was sprinkled to appease the Divine anger, pointed to Christ, and were types of his work. The high priest, also, as we have already seen, typified the Saviour; the cherubim, as it were the throne of God in the heavens. The mercy-seat, interposed between them and the tables of the law, which man had broken and could no longer keep, was another wonder, and perhaps the greatest of all. It was sprinkled with blood once a year: and this ceremony, coupled with the

solemn confession of sins then made, taught the people most plainly that God would not show mercy without the shedding of blood. Many Hebrews would rest in this system without inquiring to what it pointed; the multitude always does this; but intelligent men must have felt that it was the shadow of something unseen, and would be prompted to ascertain from Scripture, as clearly as they could, what it meant. Every remarkable event also in the wilderness journey has been compared in Scripture with the journey of believers through life. The water which flowed from Mount Horeb resembled the living water which flows from Christ—"that rock was Christ." The brazen serpent, to which the dying Hebrew looked, resembled the cross on which believers see a life-giving Saviour. The whole law is thus full of Christ. It contains only one clear prediction of his coming,[1] and the Hebrews might have mistaken that: but predictions were unnecessary when the whole design of the law was to prepare men for a Saviour, and to instruct them in the nature of his work. Promises of Messiah had been given to the Patriarchs, but now, in accordance with the Divine plan of instructing the Church, a sensible sign of the Redeemer is placed before their eyes. The ideas entertained by ancient believers regarding his person and work may have been obscure, but the promises and the signs, when put together, would furnish much firmer ground to faith than any former generation enjoyed.

CHAPTER V.

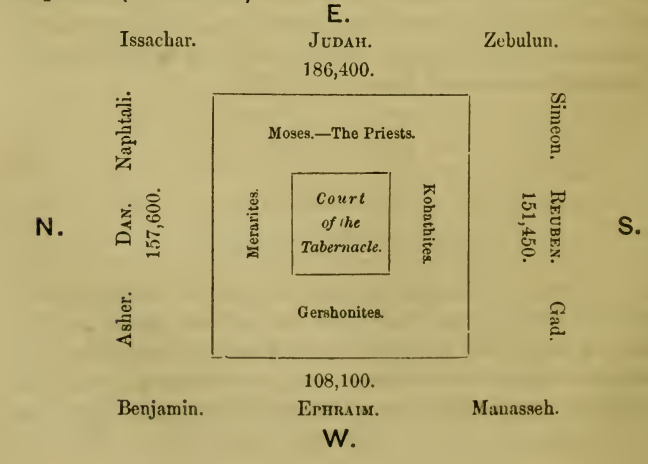
SOJOURN IN THE WILDERNESS.

66. About a year after leaving Egypt, the tabernacle was set up (1490 B.C.), and the glory of the Lord rested on it, a cloud by day, a fire by night. Aaron and his sons were then consecrated priests, and entered upon their duties a week after, by offering sacrifices for themselves and the people. Wood was

[1] Deut. xviii. 18.

placed upon the altar; but no fire was put under it: for the glory of the Lord suddenly appeared, and fire darted forth to kindle the wood and consume the sacrifice. Orders were given to keep the fire thus lighted constantly burning, and to use none else in the tabernacle service. Nadab and Abihu, the two elder sons of Aaron, disobeyed the latter of these orders by lighting their censers in the course of that day with ordinary fire. Immediate death was the punishment, and their father was forbidden to mourn for them.—(Lev. viii.-x.)

67. Several other events of importance occurred during the encampment of the Hebrews at Sinai. Jehovah prepared to fulfil his promise of giving the people the rich inheritance of Canaan, by ordering Moses to marshal them in military array. A prince or leader was set over each tribe, and a particular station round the tabernacle as a centre assigned to it. The twelve tribes, excluding Levi, were arranged in four brigades, and a captain appointed over each. Judah received the post of honour on the east, and the brigade commanded by Nahshon, the prince of that tribe, was far more numerous than any of the others. A glance at the diagram will sufficiently explain the arrangements adopted.—(Num. i.-iii.)



The signal to march was given by the priests blowing with silver trumpets. The tribes on the east set out first, and were followed by the Merarites and Gershonites bearing the tabernacle; the tribes on the south marched next, and behind them the rest of the Levites bearing the ark and other parts of the sacred furniture. Ephraim followed, and then Dan. The prayer of Moses, when the Levites set forward with the ark, is very striking.[1]

68. The events recorded in Exodus xxxiii., xxxiv., appear to have taken place immediately before the people left Sinai.[2] Moses received the command, "Depart, go up hence, thou and the people, unto the land" of Canaan. Jehovah himself, however, would no longer accompany them on their march; for they had shown themselves a stiffnecked people, and he might consume them by the way. A general mourning pervaded the terrified nation; the tabernacle was taken down and removed to a distant hillock in the surrounding desert; Moses interceded for his countrymen, and they anxiously waited for the result, each man standing in the attitude of prayer before his tent when the prophet entered the tabernacle. Jehovah repented of the evil with which he had threatened the Hebrews, and graciously promised, "My presence shall go with thee." Moses besought God to grant a proof of this restoration to his favour; and he was commanded in reply to place himself in a certain cleft of Horeb. The cloud on the summit descended around him; and a voice proclaimed the glory of God in the plan of redemption, "forgiving iniquity . . . . and that will by no means clear the guilty." The two tables of stone were renewed at the same time, and Moses descended from the mountain, bearing on his face traces of the Divine glory he had witnessed.

69. Before the camp broke up from Sinai, Moses earnestly entreated his brother-in-law, Hobab, to remain with them in consequence of his acquaintance with the desert. This request is one of many instances, which prove that Moses was not allowed always to have recourse to the wisdom and might of Jehovah; where human prudence could remove difficulties, Jehovah did not in-

[1] Num. x. 35. [2] Deut. x 10, 11.

terfere. But more important events happened at this time. At the first encampment after leaving Sinai, the half-castes, who had followed the people from Egypt, raised a serious rebellion on account of their food, and demanded flesh instead of the constantly recurring manna. The outskirts of the camp was the usual place of assembling for the conspirators on these occasions; but fire from Jehovah consumed some of them at their seditious meetings. A different punishment befell the others; the flesh for which they murmured was given, but a plague accompanied it, and cut off great numbers. The burden of these complaints always fell on Moses, and he earnestly prayed for some help amid his heavy toils. The seventy elders of Israel were accordingly appointed to form a council that might advise with Moses on ordinary matters, and share the responsibility of whatever was done. Even Aaron and Miriam cast unjust reproaches on Moses on account of his wife, and pretended that they were prophets of Jehovah as well as he. God reminded Aaron, however, that he had been appointed only the prophet of Moses,[1] and severely punished the insolence of Miriam.—(Num. xi. xii.)

70. The people were now approaching the southern border of Palestine, by which it could be entered without passing through other territories. For reasons which are not mentioned,[2] twelve spies were first allowed, at the request of the people, to search the land in all its extent, and bring back a report to the camp at Kadesh-Barnea.[3] After an absence of forty days (hence the forty years' sojourn in the wilderness) they returned with the intelligence that a more fertile country could not be desired, but the inhabitants were too warlike and their cities too strong to be overcome. Ten of the spies agreed in this report; the people believed them, and threatened to stone the two who urged immediate war with the Canaanites, and were confident of success. A rebellion was the result, and Moses and Aaron, with Joshua and Caleb, the two spies, were only saved from death by the interposition of Jehovah. The cry even arose, "Let us make a

[1] Exod. vii. 1.

[2] Perhaps it was to test the people's faith.

[3] Deut. i. 19-46.

captain, and let us return into Egypt." The ten unfaithful spies were struck dead; and the rest of the people, though spared at the intercession of Moses,[1] were doomed to perish in the wilderness during a sojourn there of eight and thirty years. Some attempted to regain the favour of God, by attacking the Canaanites in their neighbourhood, but a signal defeat taught them that their sin would not be so readily forgiven. Their tears were equally unavailing to alter the purpose of God.—(Num. xiii. xiv.)

71. Another rebellion[2] afterwards broke out in the encampment of this obstinate and audacious people. Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and 250 princes of the people charged Moses with exercising too much authority over the congregation of Jehovah. The whole people, they said, were holy, and were as much entitled to the honour of the priesthood as the Levites. A remarkable change is observable in the character of these rebellions on this occasion. The people are now the "congregation of Jehovah," animated by love and reverence towards him, but convinced that Moses is not his minister, or does not faithfully discharge his commands. Korah and his friends cloaked their ambitious views under this pretence; they wished to share in the honours and profits of the priestly office, and Moses appointed a day for Jehovah to decide who should be his ministers. The leaders of the rebellion were swallowed up by an earthquake; and the 250 princes were struck dead when offering incense. Even these terrible punishments did not convince the people of their sin: they charged Moses with having killed "the people of Jehovah;" and nearly fifteen thousand of them perished in this new and daring rebellion. These disputes about the right to the priestly office were finally settled by Aaron's rod blossoming before the ark, when those of the other princes which were laid up with it remained unchanged. The people in terror and amazement at this new wonder exclaimed, "Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish."[3]—(Num. xvi. xvii.)

[1] Deut. ix. 25.

[2] The date of it cannot be fixed, but it must have been very near the end of the forty years. It is referred to as a recent event in Kadesh about 1452 B.C.—Num. xx. 3.

[3] Num. xvii. 12.

72. The forty years' wanderings at length drew to an end; but they closed as they began, with rebellions. At Kadesh, in the desert of Zin, where Miriam died, water could not be obtained, and the murmur arose that Moses was wantonly endangering the lives of "the congregation of Jehovah." These repeated denials of his Divine commission, notwithstanding the many proofs Israel had received of its reality, proved too much for the patience even of Moses. The rebels called themselves Jehovah's people, and pretended to think that Moses was not God's prophet. The lawgiver, unhappily, could not restrain his indignation at this audacity: "Must we," he exclaimed, we whom ye thus despise, "fetch you water out of this rock." Personal feelings, not a regard for Jehovah's glory, animated Moses and Aaron in these proceedings. They resented the insult offered to themselves more keenly than the dishonour done to God. Jehovah informed them that they had not "sanctified" him in the matter, and that they would not be allowed to enter the Promised Land. —(Num. xx. 1-13.)

73. The time at length approached for conquering Palestine, and the Hebrews were ordered to leave Kadesh. Instead of entering by the south, as they would have done thirty-eight years earlier, they were now commanded to attack the eastern border. A march round Edom was necessary to carry out this order: for a passage through that country was refused, and the Edomites assembled a large army to repel invasion. Aaron died on Mount Hor during this journey, and another rebellion broke out in the camp soon after. Want of water and the weariness of the wilderness were the causes of it. Serpents, whose bite aggravated the burning thirst of the people, were sent amongst them as a punishment, and great numbers perished, until Moses was instructed to provide the brazen serpent for the recovery of the wounded. Want of water was also felt on the borders of Moab; but whether it led to a rebellion is not known: the people expressed their joy in song on finding a well. At length they reached the country of Sihon, which lay between the Arnon and the Jabbok. Permission to pass through his

dominions was refused, and a battle was fought at Jahaz, in which Sihon was totally defeated; and his country became the prey of the Hebrews. The same fate befell Og, king of Bashan, and the fertile provinces from Lebanon to the Arnon were thus conquered by Israel in one campaign. The bedstead of Og is said to have been nine cubits long, and four broad: the inspired writer does not give these as the dimensions of the king himself, and there can be no doubt that Og, although a giant, wished people to believe him of greater size than he really was.—(Num. xx. 14–xxi. 35.)

74. Another and a very curious chapter in the history of Israel now opens. While the people were encamped in the plains of Moab, which they had conquered from Sihon, Balak the king of Moab was alarmed for the safety of his own dominions. From the mountains on his northern border he could perceive the encampment of the Hebrews; and the whole country was ringing with stories of their prowess in conquering Sihon and Og, who had repeatedly defeated his ancestors and seized their territories. Balak could not contend with them in arms, and he resolved to use enchantments. For that purpose he sent ambassadors to Balaam, a famous diviner who lived on the banks of the Euphrates, and requested him "to come and curse Israel." Jehovah forbade Balaam to go with the ambassadors. A second and more honourable embassy was sent, but Balaam refused to yield to their entreaties. God again appeared and said, "If the men come to call thee, go." The prophet, eager to receive the wealth and honours that were promised him by Balak, went uncalled with the ambassadors, contrary to Jehovah's orders. An angel met him by the way, and reproved him through his ass for disobedience, but allowed him to proceed. On reaching Moab, he was taken to a mountain from which the whole Hebrew encampment could be seen. Sacrifices were offered, to Baal apparently: prophetic powers were bestowed by Jehovah on Balaam for the occasion; and, surrounded by the princes of Moab, he predicted a great increase of strength and population to Israel. Balak, supposing him to be affected by the extent of

the Hebrew camp, took him to another height from which only a small part of it was visible, and bade him curse, not bless the people. The prophet again foretold the prosperity of Israel, and predicted for them the favour of God. In a third prophecy the Hebrew conquest of the neighbouring nations was foretold; and in a fourth the overthrow of Moab and Edom by David, the star of Judah. Balak refused to bestow on his visitor the promised wealth and honours, and the prophet withdrew to Midian.

75. We cannot leave this part of the sacred narrative without considering more fully the character and position of Balaam. It is not difficult to show that covetousness was the ruling trait of his character. To obtain the money of Balak, he disregarded the commands of Jehovah, whom he professed to serve; his vile advice to the Midianites,[1] immediately after foretelling the power and greatness of Israel, was a still more shameful instance of the same thing. Like all false prophets, his only object was gain, whatever means might be used to acquire it: his mind could rise to nothing higher. He was inspired by God on four occasions to predict the future, and is therefore called a *prophet* by the apostle Peter; but his ordinary way of satisfying those who employed him was by enchantments and soothsaying: if he had been allowed, he would have used them to please Balak also, and would have cursed Israel.[2] There is nothing unusual in Jehovah appearing to him by night, and directing him what to do. In the same way, Pharaoh was prevented from making Sarah his wife; Abimelech was kept from doing Abraham harm; and Laban was forbidden to deprive Jacob of his goods. Balaam must have heard of Jehovah's doings in Egypt, the wilderness, and Gilead: he is therefore afraid when the messengers of Balak come "with the rewards of divination in their hands."[3] The case is unusual: he is unwilling to lose "the wages of unrighteousness," and yet feels that the Almighty Being who had poured confusion on the wise men of Egypt before Pharaoh, might do the same to him in presence of Balak. There was great loss if he declined to go, but a greater risk if he went. He told the ambassadors that he

[1] See next section. [2] Num. xxiv. 1. [3] Num xxii. 7.

must first consult Jehovah, and delayed giving them an answer till morning. It was useless to deny that no other god could stand before Jehovah,—that had been proved again and again; and Balaam therefore could not apply to Baal, to Moloch, or any other deity: his only hope was to turn away the favour of Jehovah from Israel. The Moabite ambassadors had good reasons for entertaining the same opinion; and it was therefore an act of prudence in the impostor to say that he would consult Jehovah that night: like all persons of his profession, he was more cunning and unscrupulous than other men. To his great surprise, Jehovah *did* appear to him, and solved his doubts in the least agreeable way; but, as was shown above, visions of this sort were vouchsafed to men of very doubtful character. If Jehovah had not appeared, Balaam would have balanced the chance of loss against the certainty of gain, and acted accordingly. It follows, therefore, that Balaam was an ordinary false prophet, who pretended to speak in the name of Jehovah as the most powerful of all gods,[1] and to whom God most unexpectedly appeared in reality.—(Num. xxii.-xxiv.)

76. When the Midianites saw that they would perhaps be attacked by the Hebrews, they detained Balaam on his passage through their country, and engaged his services in the approaching contest. He advised them to promote intermarriages between their women and the Hebrews, and instructed the former to seduce their husbands or paramours into idolatry. The plan succeeded; and 24,000 of the Hebrews perished in consequence. But the success of the Midianites was shortlived; their activity provoked a storm which might have been averted. A division of the Hebrew army, accompanied by the sacred instruments[2] and the silver trumpets, was sent against them; and every male capable of bearing arms was slain, without the loss of a man to the invaders. Some idea of the immense slaughter may be formed from the fact, that at least an hundred thousand women and children were taken prisoners. On this occasion two laws were passed. One required the spoil to be divided equally between

[1] "The Lord my God," he says. [2] Probably the ark; comp. 1 Sam. iv. 4.

those actually engaged in the war, and the rest of the people; but the tribute claimed by Jehovah from the latter was ten times greater than from the former. David afterwards renewed this law, though in a somewhat different form. The second law required everything that had been defiled by the touch or use of idolaters to be purified by fire or water: metals were passed through the fire, persons and clothes were washed in water.—(Num. xxv. xxxi.)

77. Before the people crossed the Jordan, the census of all the males above twenty years of age was again taken. A comparison of this census with that made in 1490 B. C. will not be without interest.

	Number of families.[1]	B. C. 1490.	B. C. 1451.	Increase.	Decrease.
Reuben,	4	46,500	43,730	...	2,770
Simeon,	5	59,300	22,200	...	37,100
Gad,	7	45,650	40,500	...	5,150
Judah,	5	74,600	76,500	1,900	...
Issachar,	4	54,400	64,300	9,900	...
Zebulun,	3	57,400	60,500	3,100	...
Manasseh,	8	32,200	52,700	20,500	...
Ephraim,	4	40,500	32,500	...	8,000
Benjamin,	7	35,400	45,600	10,200	...
Dan,	1	62,700	64,400	1,700	...
Asher,	5	41,500	53,400	11,900	...
Naphtali,	4	53,400	45,400	...	8,000
Levi,	8	...	...	...	...
	65	603,550	601,730		

78. It is certainly very singular that a people which increased from seventy-five souls[2] to upwards of two millions in 430 years, should have remained stationary, or even diminished in numbers, during their forty years' residence in the wilderness. There is not much difficulty, however, in explaining the anomaly. While the Hebrews were in Egypt, God favoured them, and increased

[1] The number of families, excluding those of Levi, is thus 57. Add the 12 princes of the tribes, and we have a council of 69, which, with a president, make up the 70 elders. This is unlikely. The eight families of Levi should not be left out, and the prince of a tribe was also the head of a family.

[2] See under Acts vii.

their numbers in an unusual degree : in the wilderness, on the contrary, their sins kept them constantly under his frown. No mention is made of plagues or pestilence assailing them in Egypt : scarcely a year passed in the wilderness perhaps without several thousands perishing from this cause. Their labours in making bricks and building temples in Egypt, though hard, were not unhealthy : in the wilderness, barren sands, less variety of food, want of water, and weary journeys, would thin their ranks. These considerations may help us to understand why the Hebrews did not increase, but were slightly reduced in numbers, during their sojourn in the desert. The Levites, although reckoned from a month old and upwards, numbered only 22,300 after leaving Egypt. This can only be accounted for by supposing, that the tyrannical edicts of Pharaoh fell with more severity upon them than upon the other tribes.

79. Several other important events took place in the plains of Moab. The tribes of Reuben and Gad had brought much more numerous herds and flocks from Egypt than their brethren, and as the country between Jordan and the Euphrates is peculiarly fitted for rearing cattle, they requested permission from Moses to settle in that newly-conquered district. He indignantly refused, supposing that they meant to give no assistance to the other tribes in conquering Canaan. They promised to do so, however ; and he then allowed them, along with the half tribe of Manasseh, to fortify the ruined cities, and build sheepfolds in that country. Accordingly, forty thousand of them afterwards crossed the Jordan with Joshua ; and the others, about seventy thousand, remained at home to defend the women and children. The boundaries of the land were then laid down, and persons selected from the nine tribes and a half to divide it among them by lot.—(Num. xxxii. xxxiv.)

80. Before Moses was removed by death, he assembled the people in the plains of Moab, and delivered to them afresh the law of God. Though 120 years of age, his natural force had not abated, for he was still able to instruct, to exhort, and to warn. Probably the address, in which he briefly related the

wanderings of the people, and again went over the leading precepts of the law, was delivered in an assembly of the princes and nobles, by whom it would be communicated to the tribes and families.[1] Moses then committed his discourse to writing, and delivered it to the priests to be read at the feast of tabernacles every seventh year. Joshua, also, was ordained to the chief command by the laying on of Moses' hands; and the law was laid up beside the ark as a testimony against Israel, if they should revolt from God. After making some other arrangements, and giving his blessing to the twelve tribes, Moses ascended Nebo, a peak of Mount Pisgah, received a miraculous view of the whole land, and died. The last chapter of Deuteronomy, giving an account of Moses' death, may have been partly written by himself; probably, however, it was added by Joshua.

81. The furnishings of the tabernacle, obtained from the free-will offerings of the people, permit us to form a very favourable opinion of the state of art among the Hebrews. Precious stones; bracelets, ear-rings, nose-jewels, and pendants (tablets) of gold; fine linen (byssus) and leather; linen and woollen cloth or yarn of various colours; acacia wood,[2] copper mirrors, silver articles, oil and incense, are enumerated among these offerings. Bezaleel and Aholiab were filled with the spirit of Divine wisdom "to devise curious works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in the cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of wood;"[3] but, although these men were thus endowed with wisdom, it is highly probable that they had been instructed in the same arts during their residence in Egypt. The ornaments of the Hebrews, and the skill of their workmen, may be illustrated at least by the monuments of that country. The names of the twelve tribes were engraved on the precious stones in the high priest's breastplate; and, in like manner, mottoes and figures were exquisitely cut by Egyptian artists on the signet-rings of their kings and nobles. The boards of the tabernacle were

[1] See Deut. xxvii. 1; xxxi. 28.

[2] The only wood found in the desert, and preferred at any rate on account of its hardness.

[3] Exod. xxxv. 32, 33.

covered with gold leaf, the high priest's breastplate was ornamented with gold chains of wreathen work, and his ephod was interwoven with threads of gold. But gold leaf was also used by the Egyptian artists for gilding wood and mummies; gold and silver wires were probably woven in their dresses; rings and chains, armlets and amulets of the same metal profusely adorned the sometimes naked bodies of noble youths. Of the four coverings drawn over the tabernacle the two upper were leather; one, rams' skins dyed red; the other, the skins of some unknown animal. The antiquities of Egypt show the remarkable degree of skill attained by the workmen of that country in preparing leather. Quivers of different colours, ornaments, sandals, straps, bottles and other articles, were made of leather; figures and names were stamped upon it; and it was also sometimes used to cover the wood of musical instruments. Figures of cherubim were woven with yarn of different colours, or embroidered by women in the linen covering of the tabernacle, and the veil in front of the most holy place. Cloth was ornamented in both these ways among the Egyptians, as their monumental remains abundantly prove. The brazen laver was made from the looking-glasses of "the holy women;" and, even to this day, copper mirrors, dug up at ancient Thebes, admit a considerable degree of polish.

CHAPTER VI.

FROM JOSHUA TO SAMSON.

82. The book of Joshua contains an account of (1.) The conquest of Palestine by the Hebrews, between 1451 and 1444 B.C.; and (2.) Its geography. An account of the state of the country and the last days of Joshua, is also given. Joshua crossed the Jordan not far from the place where it enters the Dead Sea, and

encamped the same day at Gilgal. He renewed the covenant, and circumcised the people there, to prepare them for the work to which they had been called by God. The capture of Jericho, Bethel, and Ai, was effected a few days after. The natives in other parts of the country, alarmed for their safety, then combined to resist the Hebrews: a confederacy of five kings was formed in the south, and another more formidable in the north; but some cities in the centre of the country, which expected to be first attacked, averted the storm by making a league with Israel.[1] The southern confederates, taking advantage of Joshua's absence at Gerizim with the whole people, fell upon these cities; but were surprised by the Hebrews at Gibeon, their army defeated, and themselves slain in the pursuit. Most of their country was conquered soon after. The northern nations were equally unsuccessful: they were surprised by night at the waters of Merom, and routed with great slaughter. Many parts of the country were still unconquered; but these battles broke the spirit of the natives. No united efforts were again made to check the progress of the invaders; although, in God's good ordering of the conquest, they sustained partial checks in several districts. Israel could not have occupied the whole country at first, and to prevent any part of it from becoming desolate, or the prey of wild beasts, the original inhabitants were allowed to remain for a time. Afterwards, however, when the chosen people fell into idolatry, the heathen became a test of their faithfulness, and a scourge for their sins.—(Josh. i.-xii.)

83. The most ancient text-book on the geography of a country is contained in Josh. xiii.-xxi. It gives the boundaries of the cantons of Palestine, and the cities in each, that were left standing at the time of the conquest, or built during Joshua's life. All the tribes received a share of the conquered territory except the Levites, who were provided for otherwise. They inhabited forty-eight cities in different parts of the country, and had the right of pasturage to a distance of

[1] The constitution of these cities, Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim, was probably not unlike that of the Philistine cities in the neighbourhood.

1500 feet from the walls. It was intended by this arrangement to counteract the tendency to disunion among the tribes, which their settlement in separate districts of the country might have caused: union among the Levites would greatly assist in binding together the other tribes. At the same time information on religious matters could thus be very easily procured by the Hebrews; for, in general, few were at a greater distance from a Levitical city than fifteen miles, and most were much less.

84. After Joshua's death, the nation continued faithful to God, so long as the elders contemporary with him survived. During the high-priesthood of Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, however, the tribe of Benjamin was nearly destroyed, owing to the wickedness of the men of Gibeah.[1] The cause of the troubles which befell the Israelites soon after, was their daring violation of the Divine law, in intermarrying with the heathen, and worshipping their gods. It does not appear that all the tribes were guilty of these sins at the same time; for, in one place, the punishment of eastern Palestine is narrated; in another, of the northern or central parts. Although some districts of the country threw off the yoke of Jehovah, others always afforded an asylum to his persecuted followers, and by their own faithfulness reminded the rebels of their duty. When the Hebrews fell into sin, they were usually punished by Jehovah allowing them to become the slaves or subjects of a foreign power: they were made to pay tribute, they were disarmed, plundered, and even put to death at the will of the invaders. As soon as the yoke became unbearable, they repented of their sins, probably at the preaching of some prophet, and a deliverer or judge was sent to free them from the oppressor. A considerable number of judges are mentioned; but it is not likely that they all ruled over the whole land. The following tables show the actual length of the period during which they ruled, and the period derived from adding together the length of each administration, and the intervals of slavery:—

[1] "The days of Gibeah" seem to have become a proverb after this time; a memorial of wickedness, and a warning against it; Hos. ix. 9.

I. From the Exodus to the building of Solomon's temple, . 480 years.

Years of Solomon's reign, (1 Kings vi. 1,)	3 years.	
„ David's reign, . .	40 „	
„ Saul's reign, . .	40 „	
Joshua's administration, (page 126,) .	24 „	
Sojourn in the wilderness, . .	40 „	
	—	147 „

Period of the Judges, . . 333 years.

II.

Probable date, B.C.	Period of Slavery.	Interval of Peace.	Oppressor.	Judge.
1402–1354	8	40	Chushan-Rishathaim.	Othniel.
1354–1256	18	80	Moab, Ammon, and Amalek.	Ehud.
...	...	...	Philistines.	Shamgar.
1316–1256	20	40	Jabin.	Deborah.
1256–1209	7	43	Midian.	Gideon, Abimelech.
1232–1188	...	45	...	Tola and Jair.
1206–1157	18	31	Ammon.	Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon.[1]
1156–1096	40	60	Philistines.	Samson, Eli.

111 + 339 = 450.—Acts xiii. 20.

Nearly one-fourth part of this period of Hebrew history is thus a narrative of subjection to foreign powers in consequence of sin. Sometimes, however, the chosen people were punished in other ways. When Abimelech was made king, and seduced the people into idolatry, civil war soon broke out between him and his subjects, and their punishment was not less than if they had been sold to a neighbouring nation.

85. The first chapter of Judges contains an account of the conquests of the several tribes, and their relations to the Canaanites, among whom they dwelt. Adoni-bezek, king of Bezek who had reduced seventy petty princes under his sway, was defeated and taken prisoner by Judah and Simeon after Joshua's

[1] Probably the same who is called Bedan, in 1 Sam. xii. 11.

death. Gaza, Askelon, and Ekron were captured, and other parts of the country occupied in the following campaigns. Hebron, Debir, and Hormah were taken a few years after the Hebrews crossed the Jordan ;[1] but mention is again made of these conquests because they were among the most important successes gained by Judah. A list is also given of the principal towns still held by the heathen, who dwelt in the other cantons of Palestine. In some places the Hebrews had great difficulty in preserving their own independence ; in others they were able to exact tribute from the Canaanites. They lost the faith which animated the first generation of conquerors, and disobeyed the Divine commands. God had forbidden them to exact tribute, or to intermarry with the original inhabitants, but they did both. The Angel-Jehovah commissioned a prophet to reprove the people in a general assembly held at Gilgal ;[2] and to warn them that the Canaanites would not be driven out before them, but would become thorns in their sides.

86. The heathen marriages and idolatry of the Hebrews were soon punished. Chushan-Rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, invaded the country, and appears to have conquered the eastern and southern tribes. His rule was so oppressive, or subjection to a foreign power was felt to be so disgraceful, that in eight years the Hebrews repented of their wickedness, and implored deliverance from Jehovah. Othniel, who must have been then an old man, was inspired to resist the invaders: he defeated them in battle, and gave the land rest for forty years. Again the people sinned, and were subjected to a hostile power. Eglon, king of Moab, assisted by Amalek and Ammon, crossed the Jordan, encamped among the ruins of Jericho, and reduced the neighbouring Hebrews to slavery. Tribute was exacted from the conquered people, and thousands of Moabites roamed over the country,[3] plundering at their pleasure. Remembering the advice of Balaam to his ancestors, Eglon judged that he would

[1] Josh. xii. 10-14.

[2] It is not likely that this angel, our Lord himself, appeared to the whole people: a prophet must be understood.

[3] Judg. iii. 28, 29.

secure his new conquests most effectually by establishing idolatry among the people. With that intention, graven images were erected at Gilgal, a spot much frequented by the Hebrews in those days. This slavery and contempt for the true religion lasted altogether eighteen years, when Ehud assassinated Eglon, raised an army in Mount Ephraim, and cut off ten thousand of the Moabites, who were scattered over the country anticipating no danger.[1] Eighty years elapsed before that part of the country was again subject to an enemy. In the interval the Philistines severely oppressed the tribes in their neighbourhood, until defeated by Shamgar.

87. Deborah, the prophetess, is the next person said to have judged Israel, and there is little doubt that her authority extended over the whole of Palestine. She resided between Ramah and Bethel, and was consulted by the princes of the most distant tribes. Jabin, king of Hazor, was then master of the northern cantons which his general, Sisera, occupied with a large and formidable army. Twenty years of oppression broke the spirit of the Hebrews, and made them tamely submit to the tribute and pillage of the invaders. The highways were deserted; the annual feasts were not held; and arms were so scarce among the people, that Deborah asked, "Was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand men in Israel?" Many villages were swept away, and plundering bands of archers, surprising young women at the wells, carried them off into slavery. But faith, though decayed, was not dead in Israel. Deborah was commissioned to deliver the nation; and Barak, a pious man of Naphtali, was appointed her assistant. Naphtali and Zebulun furnished an army of 10,000 patriots, armed probably with ox-goads, but the other tribes were afraid or divided: Dan and Asher took no part in the outbreak; the tribe of Reuben was divided,[2] and refused to assist their oppressed brethren; and Issachar, though commended for its zeal, was restrained by

[1] The "Mount of the Amalekites" (Judg. xii. 15) may have derived its name from some circumstance that occurred about this time.

[2] "At the streams of Reuben there were great searchings of heart," (deliberation)

the presence of Sisera from joining Barak. Kedesh in Naphtali was the rallying point; and the army then marched southwards to Tabor, a distance of thirty miles. Sisera was encamped at Taanach in Issachar, with 900 chariots of iron, and a battle took place near that town. The invaders were miraculously defeated; multitudes were drowned in attempting to cross the swollen Kishon; and Sisera himself, after escaping to the neighbourhood of Kedesh, was killed by Jael the Kenite.—(Judg. iv. v.)

88. Forty years of peace succeeded the battle of Taanach; but the nation again fell into idolatry. Slavery to Midian was the punishment. The nomadic tribes of the East crossed the Jordan annually in spring, and ravaged the country from Gaza in the south-west, to the plain of Jezreel in the north: their flocks and herds accompanied them, and devoured all the increase of the earth. The Hebrews were disarmed, maltreated, and starved. Wheat was threshed in secret; sheep and oxen were carried off by the enemy, or died for want of pasture. Many persons fled to the mountains, and found refuge in caverns; others, among whom, perhaps, were Elimelech and Naomi, left the country. Pious men did not doubt the power of Jehovah to save the nation; but so prevalent was idolatry, that they thought He had forsaken his people altogether. After seven years of bondage, a prophet preached repentance, and encouraged their drooping spirits. Gideon, a native of Ophrah in Manasseh, was divinely commissioned to destroy idolatry, and expel the Midianites who were then laying waste the country in his neigbourhood. He knew the danger of the attempt, and was not free from apprehension, until convinced, by a striking miracle, that God was really with him.[1] Thirty-two thousand men from Manasseh and the tribes north of it, obeyed the summons to join him on Mount Gilead. Twenty-two thousand were afraid, and returned home; and only three hundred of the remaining ten thousand were retained for service. Some renegade Hebrews informed the

[1] At his request, a fleece exposed over-night in the open air was saturated with dew, and the ground remained dry; next night the fleece was dry and the ground wet. Wool attracts dew in abundance, so that the second night's miracle was the greater of the two.

eastern kings of this revolt, and enabled them to surprise and slay the brothers of Gideon, who had taken refuge on Mount Tabor. The mighty host of the enemy then approached the patriot camp, and only waited for daylight to begin the attack. Gideon, with his little band of Hebrews, occupied a hill top; about 140,000 Midianites filled the valley beneath. At midnight the patriot army descended the hill in three divisions. Each soldier carried a torch, concealed in an earthen pitcher, and a trumpet. On approaching the camp of Midian, they all blew their trumpets, exposed their torches, and broke their pitchers at once. The watch had been newly set; and the sentinels, scarcely aroused from sleep, were more easily alarmed. The blast of so many trumpets, the alarming crash of the pitchers, and the sight of three hundred torches suddenly breaking the darkness of midnight, frightened the drowsy sentinels. A panic seized the army; multitudes were trampled to death or fell by each other's hands, and the fugitives directed their flight towards the Jordan. The Hebrews, arming themselves with the spoils of the beaten host, increased the confusion and slaughter. Messengers were immediately sent by Gideon to the neighbouring tribes, urging them to follow up the victory by seizing the fords of Jordan, or cutting off detached bands of the enemy. Gideon himself continued the pursuit with his little army, and succeeded in surprising 15,000 of the fugitives, and capturing two of their kings. A large force of Ephraimites guarded the fords of Jordan after the battle, and slew great numbers of the invaders. That haughty tribe was indignant, because Gideon did not summon them earlier to the war; and their displeasure would not be lessened, when they met him returning from a second victory with the two leaders of the enemy among his captives. He soothed their wounded pride and prevented a civil war, by declaring his own achievements inconsiderable in comparison with theirs. Although means were employed to throw the Midianite army into a panic, the inspired writer ascribes the victory entirely to Jehovah: "By the three hundred . . . will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand."—(Judg. vi.-viii.)

89. Gideon judged Israel for forty years. His countrymen wished to make him king; but, conscious that this would be a violation of the Divine law, he declined the honour. Civil dissension broke out soon after his death, and his sons, with one exception, were cruelly murdered by their illegitimate brother, Abimelech. The people of Shechem then crowned the murderer king; but a reign, begun in such circumstances, could not be prosperous. Differences arose between Abimelech and his subjects; he enjoyed less power than he expected, and they less happiness. War at last broke out between them; and Abimelech, after gaining some successes, fell by the hand of a woman at Thebez.—(Judg. ix.)

90. Tola and Jair judged Israel after the death of the tyrant; but little is said of their administration in Scripture, for the sacred writer passes on to a more important theme. About three hundred years after the passage of the Jordan by the Hebrews, the whole nation fell into idolatry. Baal and Ashtoreth were worshipped in the north; Moloch and Chemosh in the east; and Dagon in the south. At no other period did the Hebrews debase themselves by serving Dagon—the god of the Philistines—who is represented on the monuments of ancient Assyria with the head and body of a man, and the tail of a fish. Eighteen years of subjection to Ammon, and forty to the Philistines, punished these national crimes. The inspired historian first relates the history of the former.

91. The Hebrews on the east of Jordan, but especially in Gilead, now sensible of the sin they had committed in forsaking Jehovah, cried to him for deliverance. A prophet reproached them with ingratitude, and bade them turn to their heathen gods. However, the people threw down their images, worshipped Jehovah alone, and revolted from Ammon. Jephthah, the leader of a band of desert robbers, was chosen general of the army by the princes of Gilead, directed undoubtedly by the prophet, who had already appeared among them. Jephthah entertained strong faith in the power and willingness of God to save the nation; but his knowledge of the law was very imper-

fect. The rash vow he uttered, the strange terms in which he spoke of Chemosh, god of Moab, giving that people their land in possession,[1] and the fate of his daughter may be creditable to his faith; but they convict him of great ignorance. Animated by the Spirit of God, he attacked the Ammonites near Aroer, and defeated them with great slaughter. He was soon called on to engage in another war. The haughty tribe of Ephraim, which appears to have maintained its independence at this time, but had refused assistance to the people of Gilead, crossed the Jordan, and demanded why Jephthah engaged in war without consulting its princes. The Ephraimites grossly insulted his tribe, and even threatened to burn his house. A battle was the result, in which 42,000 of the invaders fell, and the power of their tribe was broken for upwards of a century. Probably the battle took place in the forest where Absalom was afterwards defeated by Joab, "the wood of Ephraim," which received its name from this event. Jephthah survived these transactions about six years.—(Judg. xi. xii.)

92. A deliverer was also raised up in the person of Samson to rescue the southern tribes from bondage to the Philistines: his birth was foretold by a heavenly messenger, and special instructions were given to bring him up as a Nazarite. It was predicted that he should "begin to deliver Israel." The Spirit of God was bestowed upon him in early youth, and he was conscious of being the servant of Jehovah; but, notwithstanding, Samson was an immoral and weak-minded person. His prodigious strength of body was exerted in gratifying his passions, and in injuring his personal enemies, more than in maintaining the independence of his country. The riddle at the marriage-feast was treacherously disclosed to his Philistine companions, and he slew thirty men of Askelon in revenge. His wife was given to another, and he fired the fields and fruit-trees of her countrymen. They burned her and her father, but that did not satisfy him, and he slew a multitude of the Philistines: they

[1] Judg. xi. 24. Afterwards he calls Jehovah *the Judge*, referring manifestly to Gen. xviii. 25.

then invaded Judah, and demanded that Samson should be delivered into their hands. The Hebrews respected him as a judge appointed by Jehovah, but they had no desire to involve themselves in his personal quarrel with their oppressors; and three thousand of them surrendered him to the enemy. Samson, however, conscious that the cause of Jehovah in man's apprehension was dependent on his unaided efforts, burst the cords with which he was bound, and slew great numbers of the Philistines. From that time, probably, the invasions of the oppressors were less frequent, and their rule less severe; but Samson did not entirely deliver the southern tribes: they had not faith to repent of their wickedness, or to recognise in him a deliverer raised up by Jehovah. His unhappy fall again brought him into collision with the Philistines. They deprived him of his strength and put out his eyes; but he, repenting, avenged himself for the loss of sight by pulling down their great temple, and burying their chief men among the ruins. Notwithstanding his weakness in many things, Samson sometimes showed strong faith. Ready to faint with thirst after the slaughter of the Philistines in Lehi, he remembered that he was God's servant, and implored him to send relief: a spring of water gushed forth in the place, and was Jehovah's approval of Samson's faith in his power and willingness to help. Immediately before his death, he prayed for strength to pull down the temple upon his enemies: he felt that it must come from God, and believing that it would not be withheld he grasped the pillars, and sacrificed himself to avenge his sufferings and free his country.—(Judg. xiv.-xvi.)

93. The book of Ruth forms a third appendix to the book of Judges: the stories of Micah and the Levite of Mount Ephraim (Judg. xvii.-xxi.) form the other two. It is somewhat remarkable that all three are more or less connected with Bethlehem. Ruth lived and died in that town: Micah's priest and the concubine of the Levite were natives of it. Perhaps the return of Naomi to Bethlehem took place after the overthrow of the Midianites by Gideon; for the cruel ravages of that people would explain the famine which forced Naomi and her family to

leave Bethlehem for Moab. It is difficult, however, to fix the date; for famine was not an unusual visitor in those times. The Hebrew phrase *to build the house of any one*, which occurs in this book,[1] means *to give a large family*.

94. It appears from the preceding history that a period of spiritual darkness followed, on the removal of the elders who outlived Joshua. The book of Judges furnishes many proofs of this. First, ignorance of the law was very prevalent among even the most enlightened members of the nation. Gideon is said to have made an ephod with the golden ear-rings, chains, and jewels taken from the Midianites, and the golden calf made by Aaron from the ear-rings of the people is immediately suggested to the reader's mind. A linen ephod, however richly embroidered, would not perhaps have cost one-fourth of the sum Gideon had at his disposal; and it is plain that the money was put to a different purpose. An ephod implies a priest to wear it:[2] the idolatry into which this ephod led Israel, and the ruin that it caused Gideon's house, imply that image-worship was the real sin of Gideon; but the sacred writer, grieved at the crime of that great man, speaks of it under a less severe name. The images were set up at Ophrah, where Gideon first signalized his zeal for Jehovah by throwing down the image of Baal. But it must not be supposed that the hero became a heathen. The story of Micah, which forms the first appendix to the book of Judges, shows to whom these images were dedicated; for the mother of that man set apart a sum of money to provide household gods for the service of Jehovah, not Baal; and he himself looked for a blessing from Jehovah when he secured a Levite for his family priest. A breach of the second commandment, but not of the first, was thus committed by Gideon and Micah. Jephthah's history affords another instance of the low spiritual state of the period. Human sacrifices were forbidden in the strongest language by the law of Moses; and vows committing

[1] Ruth iv. 11.

[2] So Hosea, speaking in irony of the approaching doom of Israel, says, the nation should remain "many days without a sacrifice, and without an ephod, and without an image, and without teraphim" (iii. 4).

a person to illegal acts were not binding; but Jephthah disobeyed both laws in observing a rash vow, and sacrificing his daughter.[1] The feelings of the inspired writer are again too strong to permit a distinct statement of the sacrifice: he recoils from it in horror. Second, another proof of the low spiritual state of the times is, that marriages with the heathen were celebrated even by pious men. A singular instance of forgetfulness of the law in this respect is found in the book of Ruth. Hebrews were not permitted to intermarry with the neighbouring nations; and a Moabite could not be received into the congregation until the tenth generation, that is, could not become a Hebrew at all. Both laws were broken in the case of Ruth the Moabitess. Samson sought the hand of a Philistine woman; and, when his parents dissuaded him against forming that connexion, they did not ground their opposition on the injunctions of the law, but on the unreasonableness of seeking a wife from a hostile people.[2] Third, the Levites were guilty of the sin afterwards denounced by the prophets: they taught for hire, and flattered their employers. The case of the young Levite, who was engaged as Micah's priest, it is to be feared, was not uncommon. He belonged to Bethlehem, and wandered through the country in search of employment, until he was engaged by Micah in Mount Ephraim. The Danite scouts, who passed a night in the house, knew him; and it is therefore probable that he had already visited their territory. Fourth, the spirituality of the tabernacle worship was lost, at least towards the close of this period. Instead of trusting in Jehovah for deliverance from the Philistines, the people put their confidence in the ark, substituting the symbol of his presence for the presence itself.

95. History furnishes some mournful proofs of the low state of morality during the age of the Judges. Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, was still alive when the dreadful story of the Levite, which forms the second appendix to the book, occurred at Gibeah. The actions of Ehud and Jael, both of whom murdered

[1] A wrong interpretation of Lev. xxvii. 28, 29, may have misled Jephthah.

[2] Another curious violation of the Hebrew marriage law in the case of female heirs occurred during this period; 1 Chron. ii. 34, 35

men under circumstances which entitled them to respect or protection, do not indicate a high moral tone existing among the Hebrews of their time. The polygamy of Gideon, the parentage of Jephthah, and the debauchery of Samson, are mournful blots upon the character of their age. The state of matters in Eli's days was much worse; the female sex were depraved, and the high priest was accustomed to see women in a state of drunkenness before the altar of Jehovah![1] It would be wrong to infer from these facts, however, that the true religion had altogether disappeared in this age. Certainly, it was under a cloud, and sin was countenanced in high places; but many persons, of whom history has preserved no record, were devoted servants of Jehovah.

96. After the conquest and before the final division of the country, the first act of the nation was the erection of the tabernacle at Shiloh. That town was in the centre of the country, conveniently situated for all the tribes assembling at the solemn festivals each year, but it belonged to Ephraim, which thus acquired an influence in the nation, not always productive of good. Jacob bestowed the birthright, forfeited by Reuben, upon that tribe; and this, combined with other circumstances, made its members intolerably haughty. But the "Shiloh" was promised to Judah; though that tribe, unlike Ephraim, made no attempt to lead the others during the time of the Judges. A division, however, took place at a very early period between Judah and the other tribes. The birthright was so distinctly given to Ephraim, and the "Shiloh" to Judah, that this was unavoidable. Scripture, therefore, distinguishes between the men of Judah and the men of Israel 120 years[2] before the separation took place under Rehoboam; and the distinction must have been made at a much earlier period. It would throw considerable light on the state of feeling among the tribes in Joshua's days, if we could ascertain why the place where the tabernacle was set up in the territory of Ephraim was called Shiloh. That sacred name belonged to Judah; but here it is applied to a town of Ephraim, and there is something concealed under the circumstance.

[1] 1 Sam. i. 13, 14. [2] 1 Sam. xi. 8.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM SAMUEL TO SOLOMON.

97. The books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles were classed under the division *prophets*, by the ancient Jewish doctors; for the word translated *prophet* meant one who communicated to men the will of God, whether he foretold future events or not. One part of the books of Samuel is thought to have been written by Samuel himself; the other by Nathan and Gad, the councillors and prophets of David.[1] It is not known by whom the two books of Kings were compiled, but Ezra is generally regarded as the writer of Chronicles.

SAMUEL, 1155-1058 B.C.

98. Samuel belonged to Mount Ephraim,[2] and was a member of the tribe of Levi. Dedicated before his birth to the service of Jehovah, he was better than a son to the high priest, Eli. Israel at that time was in bondage to the Philistines, chiefly in consequence of the gross wickedness that prevailed, although the people were idolaters also. The nation was weary of a foreign yoke; and, remembering that God always sent prophets before he delivered, they heard with pleasure that Samuel had been honoured with communications from heaven. Emboldened by this sign they rose against their oppressors, but were defeated at Aphek, with the loss of the ark and 34,000 men (1116 B.C.) Eli swooned on receiving the news, and was killed by the fall from his seat; and Samuel succeeded him as judge of Israel. He showed the people that they could not be delivered, without first putting away the heathen gods they were worshipping, and repenting of their wickedness; and, as soon as these things were done, he assembled them at Mizpeh. The Philistine rulers heard of this gathering, and raised an army to

[1] 1 Chron. xxix. 29.

[2] His father was "an Ephrathite;" but that term denoted an inhabitant of Mount Ephraim, as well as of Bethlehem. In Judges xii. 5, Ephraimite in our version is Ephrathite in the original.

disperse it. Samuel prayed for assistance, and was enabled to defeat the invaders with great slaughter. The Amorites, as the Philistines are called, made no further attempts on Israel while Samuel was judge, though they still retained some of the hill forts;[1] and he was thus allowed to attend to the internal affairs of the country. The rest which the people enjoyed seemed likely to be disturbed as he advanced in years. His sons allowed themselves to be bribed, and justice was not administered in their courts: Nahash, the Ammonite, was preparing to invade the country with a formidable army,[2] and the Philistines again threatened its independence. The people, despairing of safety, believed that a king, by giving union to the divided members of the nation, would inspire them with new strength, and demanded to have a visible head set over them. Provision was made for that contingency in the law.[3] The people asked a king from Samuel, without taking the matter into their own hands; and the prophet, on consulting God, was directed to comply with their request. Samuel was displeased because they seemed to think that he had not discharged his high office aright; but he was told that Jehovah, not he, had ground to complain. Israel thought that their union under Jehovah was not calculated to weld them into a united whole, unless they had a prince who might gather the force of the whole country, and take active steps against an enemy without delay; Jehovah was rejected, therefore, not Samuel. Perhaps some of the chief men expected to be appointed king, for, when Saul was chosen at Mizpeh, a party in the nation refused to give in their allegiance. The new king was immediately called upon to take the field against Nahash, who had invaded the east country, and laid siege to Jabesh-gilead. By his promptitude and bravery the city was relieved, and the invader completely defeated. Saul's authority was at once established by this success; and in an assembly held at Gilgal, the people renewed their allegiance with a heartiness that silenced all opposition; and Samuel, giving them a farewell address, withdrew into private life.—(1 Sam. i.-xii.)

[1] 1 Sam. x. 5. [2] 1 Sam. x. 27; xii. 12. [3] Deut xvii. 14.

SAUL, 1096-1056,[1] B.C.

99. The Philistines were alarmed at the prospect of union among the tribes, and at the vigour of Saul. Another Joshua seemed to have arisen; and unless prompt measures were taken, they might soon be called on to defend their own country, instead of invading their neighbours'. The Hebrews were unable to resist the force sent against them, and a general disarming of the southern tribes took place; but Saul did not despair. He retained a body of 3000 men about his person and withdrew to Gilgal, waiting for a favourable opportunity of attacking the Philistines; victories over large armies had often been gained with smaller numbers. Many of his soldiers fled beyond Jordan, and others hid themselves in the mountain-caves that abound in Palestine. Saul was in presence of a superior force, and expected to be attacked every moment. His men, armed with goads and other implements of agriculture, were afraid of the enemy; and Samuel, who had promised to inquire of Jehovah what should be done, had not arrived. The king became impatient, and either offered sacrifice himself, or ordered the priest to proceed without further delay. This was treason against Jehovah, and Saul was told that he had forfeited the kingdom by his conduct.—(1 Sam. xiii.)

100. Although the numbers following Saul were now reduced to six hundred, he did not despair. The Philistines retired, and he followed them. Jonathan, his eldest son and the favourite of the nation, captured Michmash, one of the hill forts, with the assistance of his armour-bearer, and threw the invaders into a panic which ended in their complete destruction. The nation was thus delivered from slavery to the Philistines. Saul was equally successful in other quarters. Ammon and Moab on the south and east were humbled; a tribe of Amalek, not the whole nation, was destroyed; and Edom chastised. Zobah in the north-east was stripped of the pasture grounds stretching to the right bank of the Euphrates—a conquest which led to an invasion of Palestine in the reign of David. This success, however, was gained by the eastern tribes, who sent an army of

[1] Acts xiii. 21. Josephus also says that Saul reigned forty years.

44,000 men against the occupants of these lands.[1] But Saul did not obey the commands of Jehovah in these wars. Instead of utterly destroying the Amalekite tribe, against which the irrevocable oath of *cherem* had been pronounced, he allowed their head man to escape, and saved the best of the cattle alive to sacrifice at Gilgal. Samuel, though grieved at the sad fate of Saul, was commanded to tell him that he had lost the favour of God by this second act of disobedience, and that his family would not retain the throne. With difficulty could the rejected king then persuade Samuel to honour him before the people. Deep melancholy settled upon the king's mind after this announcement; and his servants, knowing that he was singularly susceptible to the influence of music,[2] persuaded him to send for David, whom one of them recommended as a skilful player upon the harp. Samuel, in obedience to the Divine command, had already visited Bethlehem, and anointed him king. When David reached the court, Saul was preparing to oppose a Philistine invasion, and could not see him.[3] Soon after, the single combat between David and Goliath took place at Elah, and the former became armour-bearer and minstrel to Saul. Excessive popularity nearly cost the youthful hero his life. Saul was conscious that David had been chosen to succeed him on the throne:[4] Jonathan knew it, and from love to David renounced any claims he might have himself; and it was a common belief among the people.[5] Saul repeatedly tried to kill him, but failed; and so malignant was his hatred against David, that he slew "the priests of Jehovah," because they had unwittingly assisted him in his flight. At length after driving David, the bravest and most popular of his officers, into exile, he found himself called upon to meet a formidable army of the Philistines, which was ravaging the fertile plain of Jezreel. Abandoned by Jehovah, and driven to despair, the unhappy monarch consulted a fortune-teller about the future, thus

Probably 1064 B.C.

[1] 1 Chron. v. 9, 10, 18-22.

[2] He *sang* himself in these melancholy fits. See 1 Sam. xviii. 10.

[3] See this discussed in § 112.

[4] 1 Sam. xx. 31; xxiii. 17; xxiv. 20.

[5] 1 Sam. xxv. 30.

adding to his former guilt a crime punished with death under the law. Not long after he was defeated by the enemy on Mount Gilboa, and slain with his three eldest sons (1056 B.C.)—(1 Sam. xiv.-xxxi.; 1 Chron. x.)

101. Though Saul was not obedient in all things "to the voice of Jehovah," and thus brought ruin upon himself and his family, he was not wanting in zeal for the true religion. He built at least one altar in commemoration of God's goodness towards him. Fortune-tellers of all kinds were nearly rooted out of the kingdom,[1] though a few still continued to practise their arts in secret. "Zeal for the children of Israel and Judah" led him to put some of the Gibeonites to death, contrary to the agreement made with them by Joshua. Like Jephthah, he would have kept a vow uttered to Jehovah, even if it had caused the death of Jonathan; but the people interposed to save their favourite. The subjects and officers of Saul never complained of his conduct: eleven tribes remained faithful to his family after the battle of Gilboa, and even David himself, who suffered many injuries at his hands, always spoke of him with affection and respect. But he was self-willed, and forgot the heavenly King to whom he owed allegiance. He often acted more like an independent sovereign than the deputy of a superior, and the evil-disposed men in his court, of whom David was justly afraid, encouraged this criminal weakness of the monarch.

102. The history of David is divided in Scripture into three parts:—(1.) His advancement and sufferings; (2.) From the death of Saul to the war with Ammon; (3.) From the Ammonite war to David's death.

DAVID, 1087-1056 B.C. 103. (1.) David spent his youth in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, in the wilderness and probably within sight of Jerusalem, engaged in keeping his father's flocks. Every tradition connected with Jerusalem, every spot in its vicinity was well known to him from childhood; and he showed the strength of youthful affection, as much as anything else, in afterwards making it the capital of his kingdom. He

[1] See 1 Sam. xv. 23.

inherited the simple faith of his distinguished ancestors; and displayed while yet a shepherd youth a prowess which became the talk of the country, and marked him out as a worthy descendant of Nahshon, prince of Judah.[1] In the campaign which followed the battle of Elah, and in the border raids that succeeded, he showed abilities as a soldier and a statesman which commended him to the favour of all classes of the nation: he was advanced to a high post in the army, and at last received Michal, the king's younger daughter, in marriage. His election to the kingdom by Jehovah, though at first confined to a small circle of friends, now became matter of public talk; and Saul resolved on his death. Twice he threw his spear at David; once he surrounded his house with armed men, and David only escaped by the coolness of Michal. The king even tried to drag him from the protection of Samuel, and at last orders were given to the courtiers to kill him without ceremony. David was compelled to flee for his life. Weary and hungry he reached Nob, where the high priest then resided: a few faithful soldiers followed their commander. He concealed them at some distance from the town, entered it alone, and got food and arms from Ahimelech by falsehood;[2] but the hospitality shown to the fugitive afterwards cost all the priests of the city, except one, their lives. David then fled to Gath, where the friends and descendants of the giant he had slain appear to have demanded vengeance for that deed of arms; and he only escaped by another falsehood, *feigned madness*. From Gath he went to Adullam, a mountain cave not far from Bethlehem. His family and friends, among whom his brave nephews, Joab and Abishai, especially deserve mention, flocked to him with many brave men from all parts of Israel, until the number of his band reached 600. His father and mother were too old to follow the movements of these

[1] David's position in society, in virtue of his descent from this chief, was as high as that of any man among the twelve tribes.

[2] From the manner in which Ahimelech speaks of David, it is evident that the latter must have been a frequent visitor at Nob. He had been accustomed to appear at the tabernacle, along with some of his friends; 1 Sam. xxi. 1; xxii. 14. Hence the longings after God's courts which he breathes out in Psalms written during his exile.

outlaws, and he removed them for safety to Moab. Gad, the seer, also repaired to the cave, and there was thus one at least who could appreciate the songs David composed, when thirsting "like the hart for water-brooks." Saul gave him no rest, however, but hunted him, "like a partridge upon the mountains," and at length forced him to enter the service of Achish, king of Gath. Ziklag, a town of Simeon, then became his residence. Again he sinned and was sharply punished. He attacked scattered parties of the desert tribes; and, leaving none alive to report the slaughter, pretended to Achish that he had carried his arms against the towns of Judah. The Amalekites, by tracking the spoil, soon discovered the author of these murderous raids, and watched their opportunity. When David was absent at Gilboa with Achish,[1] they fell upon the defenceless town, laid it in ashes, and carried off every living creature it contained. David returned three days after, and narrowly escaped stoning; but, by the assistance of Jehovah, he recovered all that had been lost.—(1 Sam. xvi.-xxx.; 1 Chron. xii. 1.-22.)

104. The want of faith that David showed in these trials reminds us, that though "the man after God's own heart," he was still only a man. If we would understand his heart aright, we must read the Psalms composed during this period of his life. Psalm lix., according to the title, was written when Michal saved his life; Psalm lvi., "the dumb dove among strangers," when he was feigning madness in Gath; Psalms lxiii. and cxlii. when, in the cave or the wilderness, he was pouring out his soul in anxious desires after God. Several others appear to have been written about this time, and they all breathe the faith of a sad yet trusting spirit.

DAVID, 1056-1034 B.C.

105. (2.) As soon as David was informed of the death of Saul on Gilboa, he sent presents out of the spoil taken from the Amalekites to the elders of several towns in Reuben, Benjamin, and Judah. He also composed an elegy called *The Bow* on Saul and Jonathan, and commended the men of Jabesh-gilead for the valour they displayed in rescuing

[1] He went as far as Manasseh at least; 1 Chron. xii. 19.

and burying their bones. The tribe of Judah at once chose David king; but the other tribes appear to have been undecided whom to elect.[1] Ishbosheth, the youngest son of Saul, still survived, but he had neither been chosen by Jehovah, nor were his claims equal to those of David. After five years of an interregnum,[2] Abner established the authority of Ishbosheth over all the country except Judah. War then broke out between the two parties; but, if we may judge from the number that fell at the battle of Gibeon,[3] the contest was unpopular, and neither was able to raise large armies. The remembrance of David's youthful heroism,[4] the treachery and death of Abner, and the murder of Ishbosheth, at length cleared the way for the union of the whole nation under David. Upwards of 300,000 men assembled at Hebron to make him king; only 14,000 came from the tribes of Judah and Simeon; and most of the Benjamites still adhered to the house of Saul. Zadok, the priest, then a young man, took an active part in the proceedings, and probably owed his subsequent advancement to this cause. The meeting lasted three days, and the election of David gave the greatest satisfaction to the nation.—(2 Sam. i.-iv.; 1 Chron. xii. 23-40.)

106. The first act of the new king was to secure Jerusalem for the capital of his kingdom. It was one of the strongest fortresses in the country, more conveniently situated than Hebron, and in the immediate neighbourhood of Judah, on which he could most confidently reckon in the event of civil war.[5] The Philistines were not indifferent spectators of these proceedings. So long as David was only king of Judah, they gave him no molestation; but they trembled for their safety when he became head of the twelve tribes. Suddenly invading the country, they occupied the vale of Rephaim, garrisoned Bethlehem, and forced David to flee to the cave of Adullam; but they were twice defeated, and driven out of the land. The next act of the united

[1] 2 Sam. iii. 17, 18.

[2] Ishbosheth reigned only two years; David reigned seven in Hebron.

[3] 20 and 360. 2 Sam. ii. 30, 31.

[4] 1 Chron. xi. 2; 2 Sam. iii. 1.

[5] The rebellion of Absalom renders this doubtful, for it seems to have first broken out in Judah.

people was the bringing of the ark from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem. It had not been much used in Saul's days,[1] but David, intending to make it again the centre of the national worship, pitched a new tabernacle for it in Jerusalem.[2] He broke the law, however, by placing it on a cart, instead of having it borne by the Levites. Uzzah, who guided the oxen, touched it, and was struck dead; and David, angry at this unhappy consequence of his sin, desisted for three months from the attempt. The error was pointed out to him in the meantime,[3] and the ark was then brought to Zion, attended by a guard of chosen soldiers. He even proposed to build a temple, but was not allowed to do more than lay up materials for it, prepare the plan, arrange the courses of the priests, and compose most of the psalms which were sung in the worship of God.[4] His piety was rewarded with the promise, that "his seed should endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before God."[5]—(2 Sam. v.-viii.; 1 Chron. xi., xiii.-xvi.)

107. Foreign nations now courted the alliance, and dreaded the power of this great monarch. Hiram of Tyre sent him cedar from Lebanon for his palace, in token of respect and friendship; the king of Hamath gave him many valuable presents; and Nahash, the Ammonite, was his friend. Moab was subdued; Gath was taken, and several battles were fought with the Philistines, perhaps before its walls. Hadarezer of Zobah, attempting to regain the country lost to his dominions in the days of Saul, was twice defeated with great slaughter; Damascus was occupied by a Hebrew garrison; and Edom, probably taking advantage of these troubles in the north of Palestine to invade the south, was subdued by Joab and Abishai. But the last foreign war in which David engaged proved the most serious of all. Hanun, the son of Nahash, insulted his ambassadors. Joab was sent with an army to chastise this insolence, and penetrated to Rabbah, the capital of Ammon. Hanun called in the aid of Syria, and Joab found himself unexpectedly surrounded by a formidable

[1] 1 Chron. xiii 3

[2] The Mosaic tabernacle was at Gibeon.

[3] 1 Chron. xv. 4-13; Num. iv. 15, 16.

[4] Probably he also prepared the top of Moriah by smoothing the rock.

[5] Ps. lxxxix

force: the garrison of Rabbah was in front, their allies in his rear. With some difficulty he succeeded in driving the former into the city, and beating off the latter, but he was then compelled to return to Jerusalem for reinforcements. The next campaign was carried on by David himself with the whole array of the kingdom. He met the Syrians at Helam on their march to Rabbath-Ammon; and the defeat they suffered was so complete, that they were unable to offer further resistance, and became David's tributaries. In the following year, Rabbath-Ammon was besieged; Uriah the Hittite slain; and the foreign wars, and domestic peace of David, ended at the same time.

1033-1016 B.C. 108. (3.) Domestic discord and civil war, arising out of David's adulterous connexion with Bathsheba, prevented him from developing the resources of the rich countries of which he was now king. Most of the Canaanites were reduced to slavery, and their towns occupied by his garrisons: of all the kingdoms between Damascus and the Red Sea on the one hand, and the Euphrates and Mediterranean on the other, that harassed Israel at the beginning of his reign, not one was now independent. In this great prosperity he forgot the God who gave it, and "the sword never departed from his house" afterwards in consequence. Amnon, his eldest son, seeing his father escape without punishment in the matter of Bathsheba, imitated that wickedness by dishonouring his sister Tamar; and began the series of judgments which rendered the remainder of David's life miserable. Absalom, Tamar's brother, waited two years for vengeance; when, pretending friendship and kindness, he murdered Amnon at a sheep-shearing. He fled to his grandfather, Talmai, king of Geshur; and David, whose favourite he was, allowed the crime to pass unpunished. After three years he was recalled on the advice of Joab, who perhaps supposed that he was heir to the throne, for David's second son is mentioned only once in history, and it is probable that Absalom was now his eldest surviving child. Joab, perceiving the wasting effects of hardship and care on David's frame, probably paid court to Absalom, as the king's successor, by this advice. The prince

soon discovered, however, that, though the favourite of David, he was not the chosen of Jehovah ;[1] and he prepared to seize by force what he could not get by right. Recommending himself to the people by unusual condescension and affability, fanning discontents into a flame, and regretting his inability to assist the injured, he gained the favour of a large party in the nation. Ahithophel, the most sagacious adviser of the king, offended probably at the greater respect with which Hushai was treated, instigated Absalom to revolt. Acting on his advice, the young prince obtained leave to visit Hebron in fulfilment of a pretended vow, and took 200 men with him, who might have been useful to the king. The standard of rebellion was then raised ; David was driven in his old age from Jerusalem, insulted by Shimei as he passed through the country, and dishonoured in his own family by his unnatural son. Scarcely was Absalom slain, and the rebellion quelled, than a more serious civil war broke out between Israel and Judah. It too was put down, and peace was again restored to the distracted nation. The sword fell once more on David's kingdom, when, proud of his prosperity, he resolved to take a census of the twelve tribes[2] without consulting Jehovah. The population at that time must have amounted to four or five millions, but a pestilence was sent from heaven to punish this act of presumption. The few remaining years of David's life were spent in making preparations for building the temple, and in arranging the courses of the priests. On his deathbed he regretted that his house was not *right* with God ;[3] and remembering the crimes which weakness or necessity forced him to let go unpunished, he directed Solomon to call Joab and Shimei to account for their conduct. He died in the 70th year of his age, and the 41st of his reign.—(2 Sam. xiii.-xxiv. ; 1 Chron. xxi.-xxix.)

109. Joab was the favourite of the army, and possessed quali-

[1] 1 Chron. xxii. 9, 10. It appears from these verses that David knew who should succeed him about thirteen years before this time.

[2] In the only two cases in which a census had been taken before, it was done by the express command of Jehovah.

[3] "My house is not so with God" should be "right with God ;" 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

ties as an officer which rendered him indispensable to David. The only man who could be compared with him was Abner; and Joab, suspecting that David meant to appoint Abner to the chief command, put him to death without scruple, under pretence of revenging the death of his brother, Asahel, whom he had killed in battle. Amasa, the leader of Absalom's army, appears to have held Jerusalem,[1] with part of the fugitives from the battle in the wood of Ephraim; but he was gained over to David by the promise of Joab's place. Joab showed his contempt for the king by killing this officer at the head of his troops.

110. Various reasons may have influenced David in choosing Jerusalem for the metropolis of his kingdom instead of Hebron. It was the scene of one of the most remarkable events in the life of Abraham; and it was once the residence of Melchizedek. David had passed his early days in its neighbourhood, and heard every tradition connected with it from the elders of his tribe. It was by far the strongest fortress then in Palestine; and, though not in the centre of the kingdom,[2] it was in the centre of the district inhabited by the Philistine, the Moabite, the Ammonite, and the Amalekite, Israel's ancient and bitter enemies. It was also on the borders of Judah, the tribe to which David belonged, and which was most likely to prove faithful to him in the event of civil war. Historical associations of the highest interest combined with these reasons to render Jerusalem a proper place for the metropolis of Palestine: the spots most famous in the lives of the patriarchs, and in the history of the conquest, lay round it on all sides; Gilgal and Jericho, Bethel and Shiloh, Gibeon and Aijalon, Makkedah and Hebron, with many others of less note. Though not the local centre of the country, Jerusalem was the centre of its life and power.

111. The natural strength of the city, which was thus made the capital of David's kingdom, was gradually increased by the resources of art. It is situated in the centre of a district studded

[1] 2 Sam. xix. 11-13.

[2] It was nearly the centre of the province of Judea under the Romans, and was called the *navel* of the country.

with rising grounds of considerable elevation, and intersected by deep gorges. The ancient city was built on two hills, Zion on the south, and Acra on the north, separated by a narrow but deep valley, called the Tyropœon, or cheesemakers' valley. Mount Zion rises to a height of 500 feet above the pool of Siloam, at the south-eastern end of this gorge, and about 2700 feet above the Mediterranean, from which it is thirty miles distant. So elevated is the ground, that from a lofty tower in the wall built by Agrippa (A.D. 42), the whole country to the sea on the west,[1] and Arabia on the south, was visible to the spectator. Mount Moriah, on the north-east of Zion, was separated from it by the Tyropœon; but a bridge ultimately connected these two parts of the city. On the west and south of Jerusalem lay the valleys of Gihon and Hinnom, through which the waters from the upper and lower pools of Gihon flowed until they fell into the brook Cedron, a little below the pool of Siloam. On the east, a steep descent led from mounts Moriah and Acra to the Valley of Jehoshaphat and the Cedron—"the stream which made glad the city of God." The north side was least protected from assault by the steepness of the hills: the ground slopes more gently in that direction, and affords greater facilities for the advance of an enemy. David and his successors endeavoured, but in vain, to render the capital as strong in this quarter as in others. Three walls defended the city on the north; only one on the other sides, where deep valleys afforded sufficient protection. The first wall, embracing Zion and Moriah, was the most ancient; the second wall was drawn round Acra; and the third, added by Agrippa, in A.D. 42, was intended for the defence of Bezetha or the *new city*, which had gradually risen outside the former walls. If this third line of fortification had been built according to the original plan, Titus would not have succeeded, in the judgment of military critics of that age, in capturing Jerusalem. Facing the city on the east, and stretching beyond it from north to south, was an elevated ridge, of which Mount Olivet occupied the centre. The summit of this hill overtopped Zion by about

[1] Only at sunrise, however.

100 feet. On crossing the ridge from Bethany, our Lord obtained that panoramic view of Gethsemane, the Temple, Calvary, and the whole city, which made him burst into tears. Hills or plains of considerable altitude surrounded the city on other sides, and furnished the Hebrew poets with some of their finest figures:—"As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people." Although the neighbourhood is now bleak and desolate, it was different in ancient times—"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is mount Zion," says one poet; "Beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem,"[1] says another, speaking of a lovely woman. Gardens, groves, vineyards, olives, and fields of grain once existed where a barren or neglected soil is now seen. Her walls, her buildings, and the compactness which she presented to the eye were also the pride of Hebrew poets: "Walk about Zion, . . . tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces." So deeply impressed were the neighbouring nations with the labour and danger of besieging Jerusalem, that "the kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem."[2] But the beauty and strength of the city formed the least of its attractions. It was "the city of the great king;" and "God was known in her palaces for a refuge." This was the true safety of the citizens when assailed by enemies; and their confidence was expressed in the sacred song—"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

112. There is a serious difficulty connected with David's early history, which it is desirable, if possible, to remove. In 1 Sam. xvi. 21, he is said to have become Saul's armour-bearer; but in the following chapter the king professes entire ignorance of him, and none of his immediate attendants appear to know him. In explaining this difficulty, it will be advisable to begin with the introduction of David to the court of Saul. The courtier who recommended him to the king describes him in the following words:—"Cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and

[1] Song vi. 4. [2] Lam. iv. 12.

a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him."[1] It cannot be doubted that the courtier had heard of David's courage in rescuing the lamb from the lion and the bear; and that he followed common rumour in ascribing his safety to the guardian care of Jehovah. But David had not yet seen war, and "a mighty valiant man," therefore, should be "a man of great energy and power;" while "a man of war" means "a man fit for war." The youthful hero is then said (1.) to have visited Saul's court, and to have become his armour-bearer, 1 Sam. xvi. 18-23; (2.) to have returned home from Saul, 1 Sam. xvii. 15; (3.) to have gone to the battle-field at Elah; and, (4.) to have been then an entire stranger to the king, 1 Sam. xvii. 55-58. Now, David was not Saul's armour-bearer before he slew Goliath; for he was then acquainted with no weapons except the arm of Jehovah, the staff of a shepherd, and his sling. He had never tried sword, shield, or coat of mail, and would not use them when requested by the king.[2] Saul, too, it is evident, had never seen him before the interview at Elah. It is possible that he might have forgotten the features of a favourite harper's face, but would the voice also have escaped his memory? to forget either in a year or two is quite possible, but to forget both is much more difficult. The statement that David became Saul's armour-bearer (xvi. 21) is plainly added by anticipation; that is, the event happened some time after, but the inspired writer puts it down then in continuation of the narrative. For the same reason, David is said to have carried Goliath's head to Jerusalem (xvii. 54) before his interview with Saul, although he did not do so perhaps for some months after. Instead of supposing the events in 1 Sam. xvi. 18–xviii. 16 spread over several years, it is therefore better to suppose that they took place in a single summer, and in the following order:—Saul's servant recommends David to the king as a skilful harper, and a fit person to be employed in the civil or military business of the kingdom. A message is immediately sent to Bethlehem, requiring his attendance at court. He arrives at the palace;

[1] 1 Sam. xvi. 18. [2] 1 Sam. xvii. 39.

but important events have occurred in the interval. A large force of Philistines has suddenly fallen on the western frontier of Judah;[1] the king is preparing to put himself at the head of the Hebrew army; business has roused him for a time from fits of melancholy, and David's services are not required. [But David's harp was soon after employed to soothe the troubled spirit of the king; and the historian adds that this minstrel was the same person who afterwards became armour-bearer to Saul.] Accordingly the youthful harper returns to Bethlehem, without seeing Saul or any of his family. The difficulty is thus removed without the least straining.

SOLOMON, 1016-976 B.C. 113. While David lay on his deathbed, an attempt was made by his eldest surviving son, Adonijah, to seize the throne. Abiathar, Joab, and most of the king's sons, were engaged in the conspiracy: the nation also was disposed to look with favour on his claims. Nathan the prophet, however, who knew that Adonijah was not destined to succeed David, urged the king to declare Solomon his successor without delay. His advice was followed, and the conspirators immediately separated in terror. Some time after, Solomon was crowned in a more solemn manner than the hurry of the first coronation permitted; and, notwithstanding his feebleness, David exhorted his chief officers to strengthen the young king's hands.

114. A new conspiracy seems to have been formed after the death of David; but it ended in the ruin of its promoters. Adonijah and Joab were both put to death: Abiathar was deprived of the high-priesthood; and Shimei was ordered not to leave Jerusalem—a command which he disobeyed, and lost his life in consequence. But other measures were required to establish the young king firmly on the throne. Saul and David highly distinguished themselves in youth by deeds of valour, which secured for them the respect and allegiance of the nation: they had no rival in arms, who might contest their right to the throne. Solomon, however, was a man of peace, and his earliest laurels were won on a different field. At Gibeon, where the

[1] See 1 Sam. xxiii. 27.

Mosaic tabernacle then was, and where sacrifices were offered on great occasions, Jehovah bade him choose wisdom, wealth, victory, or any other blessing he pleased. He preferred the first, and the others were added in token of God's approval. A decision, which he pronounced soon after in the courts of justice, was regarded as a proof of this gift of wisdom, and tended as much to strengthen his throne as the victory at Jabesh-gilead did that of Saul, or the death of Goliath that of David.

115. Among the next acts of Solomon must be placed his marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh. The dowry he received with her was the town of Gezer in Ephraim, which Pharaoh took from the Canaanites, and gave to Solomon. Probably these people had rebelled on David's death; and the guard of honour, that accompanied the queen from Egypt, was employed in reducing them to subjection. On the occasion of his marriage Solomon composed the "Song of Songs," a welcome to his bride, and an allegorical representation of the union between Christ and the Church.—(1 Kings i.-iii.; 1 Chron. xxix.; 2 Chron. i.)

116. Magnificent public works engaged the next seventeen years of Solomon's reign. Adopting the usual plan of eastern princes, he laid the burden of constructing them on prisoners taken in war, and on descendants of the original inhabitants of the country. As many of these may have belonged to his nobles, they would feel it a hardship to be deprived of the services of their slaves for several months each year, without compensation. Among the public works in which he engaged were the fortification of Gezer, Megiddo, and several other cities; and the building of Baalbec (Baalath) and Palmyra (Tadmor) near or in the eastern desert. It was evidently his object to develop the resources of the large kingdom over which he ruled: for these cities in the wilderness were frontier fortresses; and also stations for caravans conveying goods to and from Mesopotamia. At the same time, preparations were made for building the Temple; and, when it was finished in the eleventh year of his reign (1005 B.C.), other public buildings were begun. Palaces were erected for the king and queen; a court of justice, called *the house of the forest of Lebanon*, was

built; the house of Millo, apparently a strong castle forming part of the fortifications of Jerusalem, was also erected, and fortified posts were raised in various parts of the country.—(1 Kings v.-ix.; 2 Chron. ii.-vii. See § 121-4.)

117. Solomon was the first Hebrew monarch who affected the state and magnificence of a great sovereign. In the beginning of his reign, he had "threescore queens and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number."[1] A guard of sixty valiant men, fully armed, watched near his bedside "because of fear in the night."[2] He introduced the custom of riding in chariots,[3] and all his successors followed his example. Mules had been used by David and other rulers on occasions of state; but Saul always appeared on foot. A litter or palanquin, that Solomon constructed, was the admiration of Jerusalem. The pillars were silver, the props gold, the wood-work cedar, and the seat was covered with purple. The increased magnificence of the royal dwellings is also very striking. Saul, like Abraham or Deborah, dwelt "under a tree in Ramah, all his servants standing about him." Probably he heard complaints and administered justice there. David usually appeared at the gate of the city or palace, giving audience to persons who sought advice or assistance; but Solomon made those who wished an audience of the king attend at a palace built for that purpose. The hall in which he received them, the throne on which he sat, and the guards in attendance, were all calculated to cause respect and terror. Rows of cedar pillars, richly ornamented, supported the lofty roof of the spacious hall. An ivory throne, overlaid with the finest gold, and raised considerably above the ground, formed the royal seat. Six steps led up to it, and two lions on each reminded suppliants of the majesty of the king. Five hundred soldiers, carrying shields of burnished gold, inspired all who approached with a high idea of the magnificence of the monarch, and were in readiness to execute his commands. Solomon built a number of palaces in Jerusalem, but he appears to have frequently resided in other places. Probably he had a

[1] Song vi. 8. [2] Song iii. 7.
[3] Unless Absalom anticipated him; 2 Sam. xv. 1.

palace at Tirzah,[1] afterwards the capital of the ten tribes, and much admired for its beautiful situation. He also visited Lebanon, and was familiar with the rivers and neighbourhood of Damascus; "the source of Amana," and "the tower of Lebanon that looketh toward Damascus."[2] Heshbon in the tribe of Reuben was so well known to him that he has even mentioned the gate, at which were some finely-situated ponds of water; and the flocks, vegetable productions, and fair scenery of Gilead, are repeatedly alluded to in his writings. Gibeon, not Moriah, was Solomon's favourite place of sacrifice, and the example he set in this respect proved most pernicious afterwards.

118. Other proofs of Solomon's greatness are recorded in Scripture. He was the only Jewish sovereign who possessed a large stud of horses, and a respectable cavalry force: he had 1400 chariots, and 12,000 horsemen. Horses were purchased in Egypt by the king's agents,[3] and droves of them brought across the desert to Palestine in violation of the Mosaic law.[4] Foreign trade was also encouraged. Joppa on the Mediterranean was the station of one navy; Elath at the head of the Gulf of Akaba was the station of another. The former exchanged the produce of Palestine for the gold, iron, tin, and lead of Tarshish (Tartessus) in Spain: the latter brought gold, ivory, sandal wood, apes, and peacocks from Ophir or Uphaz in Africa or India. So important did the king regard these ports that Scripture records his visit to Elath.[5] But strangers were more surprised at the arrangements of Solomon's table than any other displays of his wisdom or magnificence. The whole country was divided into twelve districts, each of which provided for one month at a time the provisions consumed at the royal table. Nobles of the highest rank, for two of them were married to daughters of the king, were set over each; and as perhaps 5000 persons partook of Solomon's

[1] Song vi. 4.

[2] Song iv. 8; vii. 4. Amana, or Abana, a river of Damascus. The lions' dens also mentioned (iv. 8), may have been constructions of the king.

[3] 1 Kings x. 28, 29. The "linen yarn" mentioned in this passage is a mistranslation for "drove of horses."

[4] Deut. xvii. 16.

[5] 2 Chron. viii. 17, 18.

hospitality daily,[1] it would require the utmost diligence and care to have the necessary quantities of food forward from the provinces. Solomon was the centre of the large crowd of persons who were thus gathered round his table. They would applaud his wisdom, repeat his sayings, and would soon become the flatterers and deceivers of the monarch. The queen of Sheba admired the arrangements of his table, and the happiness of the men who were admitted to it, above everything else that she saw in the kingdom. Solomon's wisdom became selfish: his heart went astray on trifles.—(1 Kings iv. 1-28; x.)

119. His wisdom was also shown in the proverbs, songs, and books that he composed. For many years part of the first were allowed to circulate among the people, apparently without being committed to writing; but Isaiah and other inspired men collected them into a book in the reign of Hezekiah. Of the 1005 songs that he wrote, only three are now known with certainty to exist —Canticles, and Psalms lxxii. and cxxvii. It is not improbable that many of them were better fitted to amuse the guests at his table than to be sung in the temple of Jehovah. His books on natural history have also perished; but none in those days possessed more opportunities of studying the subject. His power and foreign trade enabled him to obtain information on botany and zoology which others could not acquire; but there was a void in even Solomon's breast, for he was at last forced to say, "Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh." The first letter mentioned in history was written by Solomon to Hiram. Josephus says that many letters passed between them, and that they proposed difficult questions to each other.—(1 Kings iv. 29-34.)

120. An inglorious old age brought disgrace upon the reign and wisdom of Solomon. His wives and concubines were a thousand in number, taken principally from the nations with which Israel was commanded not to intermarry. He had not

[1] This number is obtained by solving the following question:—If Nehemiah entertained, say 200 persons daily on one ox and six sheep (Neh. v. 17, 18), how many persons would Solomon entertain on thirty oxen and 100 sheep, supposing an ox equivalent to ten sheep? The eating at Nehemiah's table is the only standard we can take for that at Solomon's.

ascended the throne, indeed, when he married Naamah, an Ammonitess, whose son, Rehoboam, succeeded to the kingdom. The truth of this appears from the fact that Solomon reigned about forty years, and Rehoboam was upwards of forty years old at his father's death. This was Solomon's first sin, and the usual consequence followed. Idolatrous altars were erected in the palace, and on the high grounds round Jerusalem: Baal, Ashtoreth, Moloch, and Chemosh were honoured instead of Jehovah, and the vile or dreadful ceremonies of their worship took the place of true religion. These enormities did not pass unpunished. A rebellion broke out in Edom, and another in Syria: both threatened to rend the kingdom of Solomon. The Edomites were reduced, but Judah was obliged to set a king over them and mitigate the severity of their bondage—"a deputy was king." A more serious storm was gathering in a different quarter. The house of Joseph, as the ten tribes were called, became discontented. The king appointed Jeroboam to superintend their affairs, which he appears to have done with great credit. A prophet of Jehovah promised him the sovereignty of the ten tribes as a punishment for Solomon's sins; and, on this reaching the ears of the king, Jeroboam fled to Egypt. The discontent of the Israelites did not immediately lead to rebellion, but it must have alarmed Solomon during the rest of his life. What a mournful close to a reign which began with the most brilliant hopes of prosperity! The true religion despised, the monarchy ready to fall in pieces instead of being firmly welded together after a peace of forty years, the threatenings of Jehovah falling around the throne in place of the blessings which were promised at first, civil dissensions and religious discord among the people, and flattery misleading instead of wisdom guiding the sovereign!

121. Several important changes took place in Hebrew worship and government during this period. David was the first who thought of substituting a stone palace for the wooden house and curtains within which the ark of God dwelt. He collected precious metals, woods, and stones for this purpose; and every successful

campaign was closed by the dedication of a large part of the spoil to the service of Jehovah.[1] But he was forbidden to proceed with the building, though the plan and directions for its construction were sent to him from God. As soon after David's death as the state of the kingdom permitted, Solomon began the temple or palace of Jehovah on the top of Mount Moriah. By an agreement with Hiram, king of Tyre, a number of Tyrian workmen were engaged to cut down cedar and cypress trees on Mount Lebanon. The logs shaped out of the trees were conveyed by Solomon's slaves to the sea-coast, where they were formed into rafts, and transported by Tyrian sailors to Joppa, the nearest sea-port to Jerusalem. Solomon supplied Hiram with grain for the use of his household in return for these and other services. The large stones used in building and fortifying the temple were dressed in the quarries by Hebrew and Tyrian workmen; so that the sound of axe or hammer was not heard on Moriah. Josephus says that some of these stones were forty cubits long. Great skill was required in making the vessels to be used in the temple service; but, as the Hebrews were not accustomed to delicate work in metal, Huram, a Tyrian artificer, was obtained to superintend operations. Foundries were built in the Jordan valley, on the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan; and the brasen sea, the twelve oxen that supported it, the two large pillars in front of the temple, with many other articles, were cast there.

122. The dimensions of the Temple were double those of the tabernacle; 60 cubits long from east to west, 20 broad, and 30 high. It was divided into two parts; the *house* or *temple*, and the *most holy place* or *oracle*. The latter was situated at the western end of the building, and was 20 cubits every way, so that a chamber 10 cubits high was above it. The oracle contained nothing but the cherubim, whose outspread wings touched in the centre of the room, and the ark on the floor between them,

[1] Several of David's predecessors in the government of Israel had dedicated part of the spoil won in battle "to maintain the house of the Lord." Samuel and Saul are specially mentioned; 1 Chron. xxvi. 27, 28.

in which were only the tables of the law. The walls and ceiling of the whole building were lined with boards of cedar and cypress, covered on both sides with gold; the flooring was of cypress. David set apart for this purpose 3000 talents of Ophir gold, and 7000 talents of refined silver, out of his own proper good. The door leading from the temple to the holy of holies was made of olive wood, overlaid with gold; and chains of the same metal, as well as an embroidered linen veil, drawn across it, forbade access to the immediate presence of God. Folding-doors of cypress and a linen curtain closed the entrance to the temple. Palm-trees, cherubim, and other ornaments were carved on the walls and doors of these two rooms. The *house* or outer part of the building contained the altar of incense, ten tables overlaid with gold, on one of which twelve loaves of shew-bread were placed weekly, ten golden candlesticks, and 100 cups of the same metal. Three storeys of chambers for containing provisions, instruments, or treasures, and for the use of the priests and Levites, were built against the outer walls, except on the east side, and access was obtained to them by means of a winding stair. A porch extended along the eastern side to a distance of ten cubits from the wall, and the two pillars, Jachin and Boaz, 18 cubits high, were erected in it.

123. The confined space on the top of Mount Moriah was not sufficient for the temple and surrounding courts. Solomon increased it by raising strong walls, from points on the sides of the hill considerably below the summit, and filling the intermediate space with earth and rubbish. It was probably on this account that the height of the porch in Solomon's temple was 120 cubits, or four times that of the temple. Other kings followed the same plan, and at length the area of the top was a furlong square. By this means sufficient space was obtained for the two courts required in the temple-worship. One of them, known as the inner court, was for the priests; the other, called the outer court, for the people. The large altar of burnt-offerings, 20 cubits square on the top, the brazen sea for the ablutions of the priests, and the ten lavers for washing the sacrifices, were in the former:

the approach to the temple by the latter was reckoned unusually splendid.

124. On the revival of religion in the time of David, the priests were divided into twenty-four families or classes, sixteen of which were descended from Eleazar, and eight from Ithamar, the sons of Aaron. As each family was sufficiently numerous on ordinary occasions to discharge the duties of the priestly office, David determined by lot the order in which the families should serve at the altar, and limited the period of service to one week at a time. Only four of the courses of priests returned from Babylon, those of Jedaiah, Immer, Pashur, and Harim; but the original number of twenty-four was still kept up. Each of them was subdivided into six, five of which took the names of extinct or exiled courses though not descended from them. For this reason, Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, belonged to the course of Abia, though no members of it appear to have returned from captivity. The chief priests mentioned in the New Testament were perhaps the heads of these four-and-twenty courses. Of the rest of the tribe of Levi, 24,000 were appointed to superintend the building of the temple, 6000 were judges, 4000 porters, and 4000 singers. The stations and labours of these Levites about the temple were generally determined by lot; but the singers claim a special notice. David not only wrote psalms for the temple-worship, but instituted a band of choristers by whom they might be sung. He divided them, like the priests, into twenty-four courses, and, except on extraordinary occasions, each course served for a week, and was then succeeded by the next.

125. The possession of Tadmor, Baalbec, and Elath, threw the great commercial routes of the civilized world into the hands of Solomon. Tadmor, in the Syrian desert, was situated in a fertile oasis, about ten miles in circumference, on the road traversed by caravans and armies. Baalbec lay 120 miles to the west of Tadmor, and on the direct road from Tadmor to Tyre. The productions of Mesopotamia and India would thus pass through Tadmor and Baalbec on their way to Tyre, whose merchants sold them to the nations inhabiting the shores of the Mediter-

ranean. Solomon must have realized a large revenue from this traffic, whether he carried it on himself, or, what is more probable, was content with the presents of the merchants. Tadmor, in fact, both at this time, and for many ages afterwards, was the emporium of commerce between the east and the west. Although lying on the road by which armies crossed the desert, it appears to have suffered comparatively little from the ravages of war. Nebuchadnezzar is said to have destroyed it, but the city was soon rebuilt, and became more flourishing than ever. During the reign of the Emperor Aurelian, its governor, Oudenatus, rebelled against Rome, and proclaimed himself king. He was murdered soon after; but his queen Zenobia sustained a lengthened siege before the city surrendered. Splendid pillars and ruined temples are all that now remain of this once magnificent city. Baalbec, Baalath, or Heliopolis, is also in ruins; and travellers are struck with the unrivalled beauty of the Temple of the Sun, which the Romans built to the tutelary deity of the place. Antioch, about 150 miles farther north, absorbed most of the Mediterranean and Indian trade after the death of Alexander the Great. It rose on the ruins of Tyre and Baalbec, and at last became the queen of the east, and the third city in the Roman empire.

126. Neither Tadmor nor Baalbec remained so long in possession of the Hebrews as Elath. Both of the former cities must have been lost very soon after the death of Solomon, and either asserted their independence, or formed part of one of the kingdoms which then rose in Syria. The kings of Judah lost Elath, perhaps on the revolt of the Edomites in the reign of Jehoram; but Uzziah recovered it about eighty years afterwards. Ophir, to which ships sailed from Elath and the neighbouring port of Ezion-geber, was situated apparently on the coast of Africa. It is also called Tarshish in Scripture, although Tarshish proper was near the mouth of the Guadalquivir (Tartessus). In the same way we apply the name *Indies* to two countries ten thousand miles distant from each other. "Ships of Tarshish," therefore, meant large vessels similar to those employed in that

foreign trade, whether they sailed to Ophir, Tarshish, or any other place. The tropical productions brought from Ophir to Elath were conveyed to Jerusalem, and either retained for home consumption or sold to foreign merchants. There can be little doubt that this lucrative traffic was carried on by all the Hebrew kings who had possession of Elath. Ahaziah of Israel wished to share in it with Jehoshaphat, king of Judah ; but the ships were wrecked. Jehoshaphat saw his error, and sent out the next fleet entirely on his own account. When the Syrians took Elath from Ahaz, the trade would be diverted from Jerusalem to Damascus, but they did not long enjoy the benefits of it : for Elath was only a few years in their possession, when Damascus was taken, and their kingdom overthrown by the Assyrians. About 200 years afterwards, the trade by the Red Sea again appears in history. The Persian kings favoured the merchants of Tyre, and permitted them to renew this traffic : an emporium was established at Rhinocolura on the Mediterranean, about 130 miles from Elath ; and Tyrian ships carried valuable cargoes of Persian, Arabian, Indian, and African goods from that town to other ports on the Mediterranean. The importance of Elath was destroyed, however, soon after the death of Alexander the Great. The Grecian sovereigns of Egypt, aware of the value of this trade, and anxious to secure it for themselves, built Myos-Hormos, Berenice, and several other towns on the African side of the Red Sea. The tropical productions of Asia and Africa were landed at these ports, and transported on camels across the desert to the Nile, where they were again put on board ships and conveyed to Alexandria. Europe was supplied with the necessaries and luxuries of the East by this route principally, till the discovery of the passage round the Cape of Good Hope (A.D. 1497.)

127. The appointment of a king as supreme magistrate of the Hebrew Commonwealth under Jehovah, necessarily led to considerable changes in the administration of the national affairs. Let us first look to the great officers of state, who were almost always in attendance upon the sovereign : several lists

of them have been preserved.[1] The high-priest was the most important of these officers; in many respects, indeed, he was the equal of the king. In Solomon's time, Azariah, the grandson of Zadok, filled this office; but Abiathar and Zadok continued to retain the title of high-priest, a custom that was very common in the days of our Lord. Another high office was that of confidential adviser, or, as the person who held it was called, the king's friend: the king's counsellor was a person of inferior rank. David had only one secretary or scribe, for writing letters and transacting business: Solomon required two. Sometimes the secretary managed the business connected with the army; assigning to each division its separate duties, and receiving from the commanders reports of their proceedings.[2] A recorder or historian was also attached to the royal household: it was his duty to keep the annals of his master's reign. The royal chamberlain was another of these officers: the duties of Ahishar in Solomon's palace cannot have been light. During the prosperous reigns of David and Solomon, it was necessary to appoint some one to take charge of the tribute; but the services of this official would not be required at a later period: the treasurer appears to have taken his place. The captain of the king's guard, as the Pelethites (runners) and Cherethites (executioners) would be called now, and the commander-in-chief of the army, close the list of these officers.

128. The standing army of the Hebrew kings was not large, consisting principally of the body-guard, and perhaps a few regiments besides.[3] A considerable body of troops, however, was always kept under arms for a limited period; and they were relieved as soon as their term of service expired. During the reigns of David and Solomon, twenty-four thousand men, under the command of a distinguished officer, did duty in Jerusalem for a month at a time, and were succeeded by an equal number. A similar arrangement seems to have prevailed in the court of Jehoshaphat, and a division of Uzziah's army was always in

1 2 Sam. viii. 15-18; 1 Kings iv. 1-6; 1 Chron. xxvii. 32-34.
2 2 Chron. xxvi. 11. 3 Joab's men; 2 Sam. xx. 7.

readiness at Jerusalem for a few months' service at home or abroad. Whether the garrisons in the conquered provinces or in the fortresses of Judah were relieved after a short service, is unknown; a number of officers and soldiers must certainly have been retained in constant employment. Sometimes the whole population, able to bear arms, was summoned to defend the kingdom: at other times, only a part. David was twenty-two years of age before he saw military service, and only three out of Jesse's eight sons followed Saul to the field against the Philistines. The early kings were less strict in this respect than their successors; and, perhaps, the war administration was then less systematic. From the precision with which the military force of the kingdom is set down in the historical books, after the revolt of the ten tribes, it appears that regular registers of the whole population were then kept by the genealogists.

129. Some account is given of the government of the separate tribes during the reigns of David and Solomon. The office of "prince of a tribe," which is mentioned during the journey through the wilderness, but not afterwards, seems to have been revived under David; and was retained, at least among the ten tribes, to the close of the monarchy.[1] Eliab or Elihu, David's eldest brother, appears as prince of Judah. These princes are said to have been "over the tribes," implying that they exercised authority in their respective districts; but under what limitations is not known. A great number of inferior officers, taken from the tribe of Levi, taught the people out of the law, and discharged the duties of judges. Hashabiah, prince of Levi, superintended 1700 members of his tribe, who acted in this capacity on the west of Jordan, while 2700 discharged the same duties in the country to the east of that river. Other Levites were set over the multitudes of slaves employed on Lebanon and elsewhere, in preparing materials for building the temple; and some of them had charge of the immense treasures dedicated by the piety of successive generations to the service of Jehovah.

[1] 1 Chron. v. 6. "The ruler of the house of Judah" is mentioned in Jehoshaphat's reign; 2 Chron. xix. 11.

The princes of Jehoshaphat also superintended the Levites who taught and judged throughout the cities of Judah.

130. The revenue of the Hebrew kings was derived from a variety of sources. First, their own demesnes furnished them with provisions of all kinds. It appears from one list of David's officers, that he had flocks in Sharon and other places, camels and asses in abundance, numerous vineyards and olive trees, fields under cultivation, and storehouses in all parts of the country. Other kings were equally well supplied; but Solomon exacted provisions for the court from his subjects, in addition to those furnished by his own estates and flocks.[1] The extensive possessions of the Hebrew kings enabled them to provide for their younger sons, without seriously impairing the portion of the eldest. Second, taxes in one form or another were raised from the people. Their slaves were seized to do the king's work, provisions were demanded for his household and guards, and in two cases at least[2] a money tax was imposed. Presents from the people to a prince on his accession are also mentioned.[3] Third, foreign merchants paid tribute for permission to trade in the country, or pass through it under the king's protection: the profits derived from the commercial speculations of the sovereign may be classed under the same head. Fourth, the tribute exacted by various kings from neighbouring nations was another considerable source of revenue. Sometimes it was paid in gold, at other times in grain or flocks. From all these sources Solomon obtained 666 talents of gold every year, an immense sum in those days. The expenditure of the Hebrew kings, however, must have been very considerable. They had a large retinue of servants to support; they were constantly strengthening the defences of Jerusalem, and building castles or fortifying towns in other parts of the country. Engines and weapons of war were always required; the kings had to provide for their numerous families; and it was expected that they would set a pattern of royal magnificence in sacrifices and free-will offerings to Jehovah.

[1] Solomon's vineyard at Baal-hamon was let out to husbandmen; Song viii. 11.
[2] 2 Kings xv. 19, 20; xxiii. 35. [3] 2 Chron. xvii. 5.

The wealth of David and Solomon cannot be reckoned a standard of the fortunes of their successors, for Hezekiah, Zedekiah, and several others, were very poor.

131. The list of Solomon's principal officers shows that he was not unmindful of the support which his father and himself received in times of trouble. Hushai saved David's life, and ruined the cause of Absalom : one of his sons was honoured with an important office in the government during Solomon's reign.[1] Nathan was mainly instrumental in placing Solomon on the throne : one of his sons was the king's friend, and another appears among the higher officials at court.[2] Jehoshaphat was historian to David and Solomon, and remained faithful amid the plots that shook the allegiance of others : his brother was raised to an important dignity in Solomon's court. These instances of grateful remembrance of services rendered to his father or himself are honourable to Solomon, and not unworthy of mention.

132. During the period of the Judges, the people of Israel received no additions to their faith in the promised Deliverer ; but, on the revival of religion under David, many revelations were made regarding His person and work. In the first place, it was predicted that of all the families of Judah, he should descend from that of David.[3] Next he is described as God, the Son of God, a triumphant king like David, and a priest like Melchizedek : no earthly potentate can withstand his might, no priest of Aaron's family can rival his atoning work.[4] Third, he now appears, in singular contrast with his kingly power, as a man of sorrows. Strong enemies beset him, his garments are parted among them by lot, his hands and feet are pierced, and the people despise him as a worm and no man.[5] But, fourth, there are lower depths of humiliation and higher triumphs than any already mentioned : he is laid in the grave, but hell cannot hold him—"Thou wilt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."[6] Light was thus breaking more fully and clearly upon believers as time rolled on. Instead of the brief and mysterious

[1] 1 Kings iv. 16. [2] 1 Kings iv. 5. [3] 2 Sam. vii.
[4] Ps. ii. ; xlv. ; cx. [5] Ps. xxii. [6] Ps. xvi.

predictions of former ages, lengthened and highly-wrought descriptions of the Saviour's person and work were now communicated to the Church. But, with increased clearness, difficulties unknown to the ancients arose. A deliverer, and rest from toil, were ideas involving no difficulty, and not likely to raise questions; but a Deliverer who should be a mighty conqueror, an atoning priest, an honoured prophet, a "despised worm," dead and yet escaping corruption, must have seemed nearly an impossibility. Kings were forbidden to officiate as priests under the severest penalties; a conqueror of many lands, "filling the places with dead bodies," was not like the Shiloh in whom all nations should be blessed; "a priest for ever" manifestly could not die; one sitting at the right hand of Jehovah could not be a worm and a reproach: and how was it possible that the Deliverer, if laid in the grave, should not see corruption? The light of revelation was thus attended with greater darkness than existed before it broke so fully. Ages passed away before the key was furnished which opened up these mysteries.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM REHOBOAM TO AMAZIAH.

JUDAH. REHOBOAM, 976-959 B.C.

133. The division of the twelve tribes into the house of Israel and the house of Judah[1] is very marked at the beginning of Rehoboam's reign. Jerusalem was the capital of the latter, Shechem of the former, and Rehoboam required to be crowned in both cities. The ten tribes refused to acknowledge his authority, however, unless the public burdens were made lighter than under Solomon. Jeroboam, who had returned from Egypt, headed the deputation which waited on the king; but with unbearable tyranny he refused them re-

[1] This tribe is also called Israel in the book of Chronicles, which was written when the other tribes were scattered over the world, or glad to accompany Judah back to Palestine; 2 Chron. xi. 3; xii. 1.

dress, and a revolt was the result. One of his officers was stoned to death, and the king fled in terror to Jerusalem. It is difficult to determine what part of the country adhered to the house of David. Judah and Benjamin are said to have been "on the side" of Rehoboam: but Bethel, in the latter, and the surrounding country, had joined the rebels. On the other hand, Zorah and Aijalon,[1] in the tribe of Dan, were among the cities fortified by Rehoboam. The tribe of Simeon was never esteemed of much consequence in the nation, and it is afterwards spoken of with the slighting remark, "neither did all their family multiply, like to the children of Judah."[2] Beersheba and Ziklag in this tribe belonged to Judah: and some other parts of its territory may have owned the authority of Rehoboam. Perhaps the Simeonites, in imitation of the Danites, sought settlements in other parts of the country: a band of 500 men removed to Mount Seir in the reign of Hezekiah, and it is therefore not improbable that many belonging to this tribe were scattered throughout Israel, as Jacob foretold on his deathbed. The Simeonites as a tribe, however, did not adhere to Judah, for they are expressly called *strangers*, and classed with Manasseh and Ephraim in the reign of Asa. It appears, then, that the strength of ten tribes revolted from the house of David and made Jeroboam king; while the whole of Judah, most of Benjamin, some cities in the east of Dan, and part of the district allotted to Simeon, remained faithful to the house of David.

134. Rehoboam prepared to regain by force what he had lost by folly; but Shemaiah, the most famous prophet of that reign, forbade the attempt. The king then fortified the frontier towns on the west of the tribe of Judah, in apprehension of an attack from the Philistines, whom he would have found it difficult to resist in the disabled state of his kingdom. Levites from all parts of Israel flocked to Jerusalem, as the centre of the true religion; and many servants of God removed to Judah from their own tribes for the same reason. Rehoboam's throne was

[1] This town belonged to Judah in the reign of Ahaz also. It was evidently a place of importance; 2 Chron. xxviii. 18.

[2] 1 Chron. iv. 27.

strengthened by these additions to the population, but his prosperity lasted only three years. He fell into idolatry, and was punished by an invasion of the Ethiopian king Shishak (Sesonchis), who took his fortified cities and spoiled Jerusalem, according to the prediction of Shemaiah. The nation repented of their sin, and were delivered from the invader. No other event of importance happened during the reign of Rehoboam.—(1 Kings xii.; xiv. 21-31; 2 Chron. x.-xii.)

ABIJAH, 959-956 B.C. 135. He was succeeded by his son Abijah. The great event of his life was the battle of Zemaraim, in which Jeroboam was defeated with great slaughter. Bethel was also taken; but it was recovered soon after by the ten tribes, and the golden calf again set up (sect. 143). Worship on high places now became very common in Judah, and images were erected in honour of heathen gods: the queen-dowager set a shameful example in this respect, by erecting an image to Baal in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. The prophet Iddo directed the Jews in religious matters during this reign.—(1 Kings xv. 1-8; 2 Chron. xiii.)

ASA, 956-915 B.C. 136. Freedom from intestine confusion and foreign war was enjoyed by the Jews, for the first time since Solomon's death, on the accession of Asa. He cleared the country of idolatrous images and gross immorality, and restored the worship of God in its purity: formerly the people were "without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law." During the ten years that this prosperity lasted, Asa fortified the cities of his kingdom, and armed the men of Judah and Benjamin. At the end of that time, war broke out between Asa and Baasha king of Israel.[1] The former had the advantage at first, and captured a number of cities in Mount Ephraim. About four years[2] after, an immense host of Ethiopians penetrated into Judah as far as the fortified city of Mareshah, to which they laid siege. Asa marched to its relief, and, after entirely defeating the in-

[1] There does not appear to be any reason for referring the conquests mentioned in 2 Chron. xv. 8, to Asa's father, especially when it is said, "There was war between Asa and Baasha all their days," 1 Kings xv. 16. War at different times, and constant border raids, are meant.

[2] 2 Chron. xv. 1-10.

vaders, severely chastised the Canaanites of Gerar, by whom they had been assisted in the expedition. A solemn feast was held in honour of this deliverance: many subjects of Baasha were present, and the people bound themselves by an oath to worship Jehovah alone. This oath threatened to prove dangerous to the throne of Baasha; and he resolved to keep his subjects from repairing to Jerusalem. For that purpose he fortified Ramah on the road between Bethel and Jerusalem (B.C. 941); and his soldiers must sometimes have plundered the country around the latter city. Asa, dispirited by his want of success, bribed Ben-hadad of Damascus to fall on the northern part of Baasha's dominions, and force him to withdraw his garrison from Ramah. This treaty was severely censured by the prophet Hanani, who suffered imprisonment for his boldness; the first intimation of this form of punishment among the Hebrews. Several persons were also oppressed at the same time; perhaps for disobeying a tyrannical order of the king, that the whole male population, capable of bearing arms, should fortify Geba and Mizpeh with the materials used by Baasha in building Ramah.[1] Asa died after a reign of more than forty years, and his conduct during his last illness did not meet with the approval of Jehovah. It is thought that his dead body was burned, and the ashes placed in the tomb which he had prepared during his lifetime; but this was certainly an unusual mode of treating the dead among the Jews. The prophets, Azariah and Hanani, flourished during this reign. —(1 Kings xv. 9-24; 2 Chron. xiv.-xvi.)

JEHOSHAPHAT, 915-889 B.C.

137. Jehoshaphat, the son of Asa, began his reign with reforming religion, which appears to have become corrupt during the latter years of his father's reign. Only a brief account of this prince's life is given in the book of the Kings; for Elijah and Elisha then flourished in Israel, and the history is taken up with the narrative of their remarkable actions. The book of Chronicles supplies the deficiency. Neighbouring nations respected him, and some of them were compelled to pay tribute. He visited Ahab, king of

[1] There is a reference to some trenching operations of Asa at this time in Jer. xli. 9.

Israel, at Samaria; and, besides marrying his son Jehoram to Ahab's daughter, united his forces with those of Israel against the Syrians. A prophet reproved him for this step, but he did the same thing against Moab, about three years after, during the reign of Ahab's son, Jehoram.[1] Jehoshaphat next visited the principal cities of his dominions, and purified the administration of justice by appointing trustworthy Levites to the office of judges. His kingdom was afterwards invaded by a host of Ammonites and Moabites, who rounded the southern end of the Dead Sea, and penetrated as far north as En-gedi. The Edomites appear to have joined them on their march, but their attempt to throw off the yoke of Judah was not successful. A quarrel broke out between the different nations in the invading army, and they destroyed each other without inflicting any injury on Judah. Probably Jehoshaphat was induced to join the king of the ten tribes, in the expedition against Moab, on account of this unprovoked invasion.[2] The only other event of importance during this reign, was an unsuccessful attempt on the part of the king to carry on trading voyages from Elath to Ophir, along with Ahaziah king of Israel. Jehoshaphat's reign is remarkable in several respects. He was on the most friendly terms with the heathen princes of Samaria, and yet prosperous in his own kingdom. He caused the law to be taught to the people; he journeyed through the whole country administering justice himself; and the population under his wise administration was so numerous, that he could bring an army of 1,160,000 men into the field. Jehu, Jahaziel, and Eliezer, are mentioned as prophets of the Lord during this reign; the first-named wrote the history of Jehoshaphat's life.—(1 Kings xxii. 41-50; 2 Chron. xvii.-xx.)

JEHORAM, 891-884 B.C.

138. Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, reigned for about two years along with his father, and for five alone. Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel, was his wife, and perhaps prompted him to the crime of murdering all

[1] He may have excused himself on the ground that Jehoram was much less addicted to Baal-worship than Ahab. [2] 2 Kings iii. 23; 2 Chron. xx. 23.

his brothers, and several princes of Judah, soon after his father's death: the worship of Baal was also established, and calamities immediately befell the nation. The tributary kingdom of Edom threw off the yoke of Judah;[1] the Canaanites of Libnah, a Levitical city, also revolted; and the neighbouring nations, invading the kingdom, spoiled it on all sides, and slew the king's sons. Elijah the prophet sent Jehoram a letter foretelling these disasters, and threatening him with a speedy and painful death. —(2 Kings viii. 16-24; 2 Chron. xxi.)

AHAZIAH, 884 B.C.

139. Ahaziah, the youngest son of Jehoram, succeeded to the throne, and reigned only one year. He assisted the king of Israel in waging war with Syria, and was on a visit to him at Jezreel when Jehu was chosen king by the army of the ten tribes. The two kings were surprised by the usurper, and fled. Ahaziah endeavoured to conceal himself in Samaria, but his hiding-place was discovered, and he was forced to flee towards Megiddo. The wounds he received in the pursuit caused his death; and Jehu, remembering the godly character of his grandfather, allowed his dead body to be carried to Jerusalem.—(2 Kings viii. 25-29; ix. 27-29; 2 Chron. xxii.)

JOASH, 877-838 B.C.

140. Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, then usurped the throne. Imitating the crime and cruelty of her husband, she put the king's sons to death; but the sister of Ahaziah, who was married to the high-priest, saved one of them from the general slaughter. Never was the direct line of David nearer extinction. The sons of Jehoshaphat were all dead; those of Jehoram had been killed by the enemy, and their sons fell under the hand of Jehu; and now "all the seed royal," except the infant Joash, were slain. For six years, Athaliah tyrannized over the land. A temple was built to Baal; altars and images were erected, and priests appointed. Jehoiada, the high priest, at last formed a conspiracy against Athaliah; the plot was known to many of the Levites and officers, but so universal was the hatred against her, that she received no intimation of the intended outbreak. Joash (or

[1] The prophecy of Isaac was thus fulfilled; Gen. xxvii. 40.

Jehoash) was made king, and the tyrant was put to death.[1] Under the direction of the high priest, a covenant was made "that they should be the Lord's people." The worshippers of Baal, or the sons of Athaliah as they were called, had defaced the temple, and applied its sacred treasures to the service of their god: but the first act of Joash, on coming of age, was to repair the house of Jehovah. After the high priest's death, at the advanced age of 130, the zeal of the king for true religion began to cool. His nobles, among whom the sons of heathen women are specially mentioned,[2] urged him to worship Baal. Zechariah, and other sons of Jehoiada, opposed their counsel, and were put to death in the temple-court by order of the ungrateful Joash; but punishment was not long delayed. Hazael, king of Syria, invaded Judah with a small force; defeated the large army sent against him, captured Gath, and prepared to besiege Jerusalem. The country was ravaged, the princes of the people slain, and Joash bought off the invader with the treasures of the temple. Soon after, he was murdered by his own servants. Zechariah is mentioned as the prophet of Jehovah during this reign.—(2 Kings xi. xii.; 2 Chron. xxiv.)

AMAZIAH, 838-808 B.C.

141. Amaziah the son of Joash, on ascending the throne, punished the murderers of his father, but not their children; and then prepared for war with Edom. Perhaps that people had invaded the south country during the disastrous years of the reign of Joash. The king called out the whole force of Judah, now only 300,000 men, and hired 100,000 mercenaries of Israel; but a prophet, whose name is not given, forbade him to employ the latter; and, with some reluctance, he sent them home. Enraged at the insult, and resolved not to lose the booty they had expected, they plundered the cities of Judah on their march. Amaziah was successful in his war with Edom; but fell into the amazing crime of worshipping the gods of that country, and even threatened to punish the prophet, who warned him of his folly and danger. He next demanded satisfaction

[1] "Have her forth without the ranges," that is, the ranks of Levitical guards.

[2] 2 Chron. xxiv. 26.

from the king of Israel for the ravages committed by the mercenaries, and was treated with contempt. A battle was fought between them at Beth-shemesh, in which Amaziah was defeated and taken prisoner. He was replaced upon the throne, and lived many years after, but nothing is recorded concerning him, except his assassination at Lachish.—(2 Kings xiv. 1-20; 2 Chron. xxv.)

142. The period which we have reviewed extends over 170 years, and there are a few general points which deserve notice. It is very remarkable that son succeeded father on the throne of Judah from David to Amaziah, and also for many years after: while four families had already sat upon the throne of the ten tribes, and been cut off. Conspiracies, murders, and revolts were as common in the court of Judah as in that of Israel: repeatedly was the family of David almost wholly destroyed by the sword of the enemy, or the dagger of the assassin; but the royal line was continued unbroken. It was the fulfilment of the promise, that Jehovah "would build David a sure house." The conditions on which that promise was given, were not observed by many of the kings; but it was fulfilled in spite of man's unfaithfulness. Another remarkable fact is, that the numerous prophets who flourished under the kings of this period, have not left any writings, except brief speeches recorded in the history. Prophets of Jehovah are said to have guided all the kings, except Ahaziah, in religious matters, or warned them against idolatry and immorality. The prophet had become as essential a member of the Jewish state, as the king or priest. He kept alive the faith of the people; and explained, as far as his own studies permitted, or the Spirit of God enlightened him, the promises of a Messiah which had been given to former ages. It has always been a matter of surprise that a nation, honoured as Israel was with a knowledge of the true God, should have fallen into idolatry. Moses, who foretold their apostasy, and the prophets who entreated and warned and threatened in vain to prevent it, were amazed at their deplorable wickedness. No ancient nation changed its gods so readily as the

Hebrews: the heathen worshipped the same idols from age to age; the latter changed their religion every generation. The history of Israel is the history of the human heart, with its "vain imaginations, which are only evil and that continually." From Rehoboam to Amaziah it was a constant complaint with the prophets that the "high places," that is, altars on hills or rising grounds, were not taken away. The evil was sanctioned by long use, and by the example of many good kings; and the people could not be restrained from sacrificing on these places.

ISRAEL. JEROBOAM. 976-955 B.C.

143. The history of the Ten Tribes during this period is the record of backsliding in faith, rebellion in the camp, and treason in the palace. Jeroboam, like Saul, was placed on the throne by Jehovah, and the people readily acknowledged his authority: the revolt from Rehoboam was not at first a revolt from God, but it soon assumed that character. Shechem in Ephraim, and Penuel in Gad, were fortified by the new king; the former as the capital of his kingdom, the latter perhaps to serve as a place of refuge in the event of rebellion or invasion. Another step was taken by Jeroboam to keep the people faithful to himself. Acting under the advice of his council, composed of the principal men in the kingdom, he set up a golden calf at Bethel, and another at Dan-Laish, in manifest imitation of Aaron's conduct when the Hebrews were at Sinai. These images were dedicated, like Aaron's, to Jehovah, not to any heathen deity. Instead of three yearly feasts he instituted only one, corresponding to the feast of tabernacles, but held exactly a month later.[1] The Levites refused to serve in the temples of these idols, and withdrew to Judah: the new worship was not popular, though the king officiated at the altar himself; and it was found necessary to choose priests from the lowest of the people. Indifference appears to have been the sin of the nation. Most of Jeroboam's subjects must have seen that

[1] The distance between Jerusalem and Bethel was so short, that, if assemblies had been held in these towns for a week at the same time, many subjects of Jeroboam could have easily visited the temple at Jerusalem. It was the policy of Jeroboam to prevent this.

his imitation of Aaron's crime was a glaring violation of the law; but they were too discontented with the house of David to offer any opposition to his proceedings.[1]—(1 Kings xi. 26–xiv. 20.)

144. The king's policy soon bore its appropriate fruits. His arm was suddenly withered when sacrificing at Bethel; the altar before which he stood was rent; his most promising son was cut off in the flower of his age; and Ahijah the prophet predicted that his family would be utterly destroyed; and that his sins would cause the rooting out of Israel from Palestine. Jeroboam himself died, "struck by the Lord," in the 22d year of his reign; and the terrible threatenings uttered against his house were fulfilled about two years after. His son Nadab, who succeeded to the throne, was assassinated by Baasha in the camp at Gibbethon; and the other members of his family were cut off soon after.

BAASHA, 954-931 B.C.
ELAH, 931 B.C.
OMRI, 930-917 B.C.

145. Baasha was acknowledged king by the people; but his policy was borrowed from that of Jeroboam. The calves at Dan and Bethel were still centres of the national worship, and measures were taken to keep members of the ten tribes from meeting with their brethren of Judah in Jerusalem. The selection of Tirzah as the capital instead of Shechem, and the wars with Judah and Syria, are the chief events of Baasha's reign recorded in Scripture. A prophet of Jehovah threatened the new dynasty with the fate of Jeroboam's; but it produced no change in the king's conduct. After a reign of twenty-four years, Baasha was succeeded by his son Elah. This prince does not appear to have been a soldier: his army was besieging Gibbethon, under the command of Omri, while he himself was feasting and revelling in Tirzah. At one of these drunken carousals, he was murdered by Zimri, who proclaimed himself king, and put to death every member of the royal family, whom he found in or near the capital. The treason of Zimri, for reasons now unknown, was regarded with abhorrence by the nation.[2] The army elected

[1] Idols were set up by the people before his death; 1 Kings xiv. 15.
[2] 1 Kings xvi. 20; 2 Kings ix. 31.

Omri king, broke up from Gibbethon, and marched to Tirzah. Zimri in despair shut himself up in the palace, and set it on fire, after a reign of seven days. A civil war between Omri and Tibni, another claimant for the throne, immediately followed, and raged for the next four years, when the contest was decided in favour of Omri. Tirzah was the capital during that time, and for about two years after: Samaria was then built, and the kings of Israel lived there and at Jezreel till the overthrow of the monarchy.—(1 Kings xv. 25–xvi. 28.)

146. Samaria, the last capital of the ten tribes, stood on a hill purchased by Omri from a person named Shemer. It was situated at a height of 1500 feet above the level of the Mediterranean, and was surrounded on all sides by four hills of less elevation, but separated from them by a broad deep valley. From this circumstance the prophet describes Samaria as "the crown of pride, the glorious beauty on the head of the fat valley;"[1] and the Syrians, when defeated before the city, believed that Jehovah was a god of hilly countries, not of level plains. Shalmaneser appears to have reduced it to ruins, "throwing down the stones thereof into the valley;"[2] but it was afterwards partially rebuilt by the foreigners whom the conqueror brought from other countries. After various changes of fortune, the beauty of its situation and its natural strength as a fortress attracted the attention of Herod the Great, who adorned it with many splendid buildings about 20 B.C. He also named it Sebaste, in honour of the Emperor Augustus.[3] The district called Samaria should be carefully distinguished from the city. The Samaritans, mentioned in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, inhabited the territory, but their chief city was Shechem.

147. Ahab, the worst of all the kings of Israel, succeeded his father Omri. He was a weak and foolish prince, who knew the right, but was easily persuaded to do the wrong. Jezebel, a Zidonian princess, and a woman of impetuous passions, was queen; and the administration of

AHAB, 917-898 B.C.

[1] Isa. xxviii. 3, 4. [2] Micah i. 6. [3] Sebastos, the Greek for Augustus.

affairs remained almost entirely in her hands. A temple was built in Samaria to Baal, the national god of Zidon; images were raised to Ashtoreth; and Jezebel determined to root the true religion out of Israel. A fierce persecution of those who worshipped Jehovah broke out; the altars at which they sacrificed, and where they held their solemn meetings, were thrown down; many prophets and believers were put to death, and others were compelled to leave the country, or hide themselves in unfrequented places. But how powerless is the rage of man against truth! One of the most trusted officers of the king was a sincere and devoted worshipper of Jehovah, and had often perilled his life in rescuing God's servants from the vengeance of the queen. The punishment of such national wickedness had been pronounced long before; "the heaven above became brass, and the earth beneath iron." Elijah the Tishbite in vain warned the king that dew and rain would be withheld; and famine soon wasted the resources and population of the kingdom. So incensed was Ahab at the prophet's boldness that he sent in search of him to all the neighbouring countries; but a three years' drought humbled his pride. Elijah, by the command of God, challenged the priests of Baal to meet him on Carmel, and decide whether Jehovah or Baal were God. Ahab agreed to the proposal, and the chief men of the nation also assembled on the appointed day. Elijah was received at first in sullen silence—"They answered him not a word." As soon as he proposed the bringing down of fire from heaven to consume a sacrifice[1] as the test of Godhead, their love of the marvellous overcame their dislike of the prophet, and with applauding shouts they cried, "It is well spoken." In vain did the heathen priests call upon their god; in vain did they leap upon the altar, and lament his refusal to answer; in vain did they practise their heathen rites, and cover their half-naked bodies with wounds and blood—no fire descended. Elijah then built the ruined altar of Jehovah, slew the bullock, and filled the trench with water from the Mediterranean. The sun was setting when these

[1] In former ages, Jehovah had repeatedly declared his approval by this sign.

preparations were completed, and a brief prayer from the prophet drew down lightning from heaven. A universal shout of "Jehovah is God!" burst from the astonished crowd, and Elijah thought that the reformation, which he had been commissioned to undertake, was accomplished: "Thou hast turned their hearts back again." The heathen priests were immediately put to death according to the law.[1] A few days sufficed to show Elijah that he was too sanguine in counting on the immediate return of the nation to God: no movement was made to destroy the temple of Baal, to throw down the images, or to acknowledge Jehovah; but instead, a message came from the queen, that she would put Elijah to death within twenty-four hours. Jezebel uttered this threat to serve a purpose. If she had really intended to kill the prophet, she would not, in the impotence of rage, have given him a whole day to prepare for defence or flight. Elijah was the head of the reforming party; if he were removed, it would fall to pieces; and Jezebel hoped that her threat might drive him out of the kingdom before his party gathered strength. She succeeded; the prophet's faith failed, and the reformation in Israel was permanently arrested.—(1 Kings xvii.-xix.)

148. Famine had so thinned the population, and weakened the strength of the country, that Ahab was unable to raise an army when attacked by the king of Syria:[2] the invaders penetrated to Samaria without resistance, and prepared to besiege that city. Ahab offered to become tributary, but Ben-hadad insisted on his resigning the crown, and delivering up his family to be led into captivity.[3] The princes and people encouraged Ahab to reject these demands; and the Syrian army was ordered to assault the city. A signal repulse was the consequence, and Ben-hadad with difficulty escaped. His flatterers, ascribing this defeat to the hilly grounds around Samaria, which prevented chariots from acting, pretended that Jehovah was God of the hills, and that a battle in the plain would have a different result. Their ex-

[1] Deut. xviii. 20-22. [2] Comp. 1 Kings xx. 27.

[3] This seems to be the meaning of the somewhat obscure passage, 1 Kings xx. 2-6.

pectations were miserably disappointed. Ben-hadad sustained a complete defeat at Aphek from a much inferior force, and was compelled to throw himself on the mercy of Ahab. Prophets of Jehovah had directed the king of Israel during these wars, but he rejected their advice when the enemy was in his power. Ahab allowed Ben-hadad's mockery of the true God to pass unpunished, and was condemned to bear the guilt of it himself.—(1 Kings xx.)

149. Private crimes as well as public infidelity stained the reign of this weak and peevish monarch. Naboth, a citizen of Jezreel, where the kings of Israel had a favourite residence, was murdered at the instigation of Jezebel, and his vineyard seized to gratify a whim of Ahab. On the king's first visit to this new possession, he was accompanied by several officers, among whom were Jehu and Bidkar, who afterwards became celebrated. Elijah was waiting the king's arrival, and delivered to him a terrible message from God. Upwards of fifteen years after, the officers in attendance remembered the doom then pronounced on Ahab's family, and were the means of fulfilling it in the vineyard of Naboth. Ahab was terrified by the threats of Elijah, and humbled himself before God: the punishment was therefore delayed for a season. About two years after this event, Ahab again engaged in war with Syria, and attempted to capture Ramoth-gilead, which was then in possession of the enemy. A Syrian army relieved the besieged garrison; and in a battle before the town, Ahab was so severely wounded that he died that same day. The character of this king is summed up in the words, "He did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites." Notwithstanding the wickedness of the court, and the indifference of the people, Elijah and Elisha, the greatest prophets of the Old Testament after Moses, flourished during this reign.—(1 Kings xxi. xxii.)

AHAZIAH, JEHORAM, 898-884 B.C.

150. Ahaziah succeeded his father Ahab, and imitated all the idolatries of which he was guilty: Jezebel, indeed, appears to have still managed the affairs of state. An accident which he met with cut short his days after a reign of two years. His

brother Jehoram succeeded, and a partial reformation took place in the national worship: the image of Baal was removed, but his temple and the calves of Jeroboam were allowed to remain. Immediately on his accession, the king prepared to reduce the Moabites, who had taken advantage of Ahab's death to throw off the yoke of Israel. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, allowed him a passage through his dominions, and joined him with a large army; but the expedition does not appear to have been successful. War with Syria followed soon after, and Israel was reduced to such extremities that bands of the enemy repeatedly endeavoured to seize Jehoram on his own territories. At last Samaria was again besieged; famine, accompanied by unusual horrors, prevailed in the city, and a surrender seemed inevitable when the besieged were miraculously delivered. Elisha the prophet took a prominent part in the public events of that time, advising the king on matters of state, encouraging the people in danger, and rescuing the army and nation from ruin. The war still continued; the country of the ten tribes was ravaged, and a seven years' famine was the result. The people were reduced to feed on herbs gathered from the fields; and accidents sometimes occurred from unskilful persons not distinguishing between the poisonous and the useful. Israel appears to have at last recovered strength, for Jehoram was afterwards able to undertake an expedition against Ramoth-gilead. He was wounded before that town, and returned to Jezreel, leaving Jehu in command of the besieging army. A messenger of Jehovah anointed this officer king: the army recognised his authority, and Jehoram was slain in a skirmish near Jezreel before he could collect a sufficient force to defend himself. Jezebel, and the whole family of Ahab, were destroyed by the new king.[1]—(1 Kings xxii. 51-53; 2 Kings i.-viii.)

JEHU, 883-855 B.C.

151. The beginning of Jehu's reign gave promise of a reformation in religion, but the hopes excited were soon blasted by subsequent measures.

[1] Possibly these sanguinary proceedings of Jehu are referred to by Hosea,—"I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu" (Hosea i. 4)

The worshippers of Baal were put to death, his temple thrown down, and his images burned. As a single house contained all who served Baal, it is plain that though many may have conformed outwardly to heathenism during the ascendency of Jezebel, her foreign religion had not taken hold of the national mind. Jehu still retained the calves at Dan and Bethel; and the curse, pronounced long before, began to descend more heavily on the kingdom. The Syrians gradually extended their conquests to the Jordan on the west, and to the borders of Moab on the south; but Jehovah remembered his covenant, and had compassion on his erring people.—(2 Kings ix. x.)

JEHOAHAZ, 855-838 B.C.
JEHOASH or JOASH, 838-823 B.C.
JEROBOAM II., 823-783 B.C.
INTERREGNUM, 783-771 B.C.
ZECHARIAH, 771 B.C.

152. Jehoahaz succeeded his father Jehu, but was utterly unable to make head against the Syrians: Israel could only raise an army of 10,000 men when peace was concluded.[1] The national calamities, so vividly described by the prophet Amos, seem to have happened during this reign. Hazael of Damascus "threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron," and Ammon cruelly ravaged the same district. Drought, blasting, famine, and pestilence, laid waste the country, and thinned the population. A trumpet could not be blown in a city without filling its inhabitants with terror, as if an enemy had appeared before the walls, or were already in the streets. Such was the scarcity of food that the shepherd hazarded his life to save a sheep's leg, or the smallest piece of a torn carcase from the teeth of the wild beasts which abounded in the country. This inglorious reign was followed by the more prosperous one of Jehoash or Joash, son of Jehoahaz. He found the country weakened by foreign wars, and exposed to invasion from bands of Moabites, before whom the people fled in terror. Prudence and courage soon changed this state of affairs: he was raised up to be the deliverer of the ten tribes, and the blessing of God rested upon

[1] Ben-hadad and Hazael, the Syrian kings who gained the greatest triumphs over Israel, were worshipped as gods by the Syrians in the days of our Lord.—Joseph. *Antiq.* ix. 4. 6.

his endeavours. Aphek was the scene of three bloody battles, in which the Syrians were completely defeated; and many of the cities seized by them were recovered to Israel. Instead of 10,000 men, the army now consisted at least of twenty times that number; and Judah was unable to resist an invasion conducted by Joash. His son and successor, Jeroboam II., continued to work out the deliverance thus begun. During a reign of forty-one years he maintained the independence of the country against the Syrians, and shed some rays of glory around the setting sun of Israel. The northern parts of the kingdom were recovered, and even Damascus was captured;[1] Hamath, and perhaps also Tiphsah, were again added to the dominions of the ten tribes, agreeably to the predictions of the prophet Jonah. For eleven years after Jeroboam's death the throne was vacant; but at last it was gained by his son, Zechariah, whose brief reign of six months was brought to a sudden termination by the conspiracy of Shallum. The promise was fulfilled that Jehu's children of the fourth generation should sit on the throne of Israel; and the curse was also accomplished which threatened the total destruction of his family. All these kings were guilty of upholding the worship of the golden calves, thus "doing evil in the sight of the Lord." Jehoahaz "besought the Lord," but it was the cry of despair. Amos prophesied in Bethel during Jeroboam's reign; and the chief priest of that place charged him with conspiring against the king's life, because he predicted that the Lord would "rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword."[2]—(2 Kings xiii., xiv., xv. 8-12.)

153. Notwithstanding the revolt of the ten tribes from God, they are still called "his people;" prophets in great numbers, and possessing singular power to work miracles, flourished among them; and Jehovah even commissioned Elijah to effect their reformation from heathenism, a duty which the prophet failed to discharge. Although the Mosaic law was violated in setting up the golden calves and in building a temple to Baal, many of its provisions, as might have been expected, were still in force. The laws

[1] It did not remain long in possession of Israel.

[2] Amos vii 9-13.

relating to vows were observed; and the vow of the Nazarite is specially mentioned.[1] Lands were held on the tenure laid down by Moses: treason was still defined as "blaspheming God and the king;" death was known to be the punishment of idolatry; the creditor could sell the insolvent debtor and his family into slavery; lepers were shut out of the city or camp;[2] and even the priests of Bethel knew the law of Jehovah.[3] Body-clothes, given in pledge, were not allowed to be kept overnight; and tithes were spent in feasts at Bethel or Gilgal.[4] Tradition and custom would keep alive among the ten tribes some knowledge of their ancient laws, even after the Levites, by whom they used to be explained, had all left the country; but the people were not dependent on those uncertain guides. Many illustrious prophets preached and taught in Israel: they were followed by multitudes of eager scholars; copies of the law would thus be multiplied, and an acquaintance with it diffused over the country. Jehu the son of Hanani, Elijah, Micaiah, Elisha, Jonah, Amos, and Hosea flourished in succession during this period; and two of them at least superintended several seminaries for religious instruction. Some of these prophets possessed great influence even at court. Elisha offered to procure a situation in the palace or a post in the army for the husband of his benefactress, the Shunamite; Jehoram called him "my father," and took great delight in listening to accounts of the miracles he had wrought; Joash visited him when on his deathbed, and the army at once acknowledged his right to anoint Jehu king. Elisha was one of the most useful members of the nation under these kings; but their respect for him was due to the most selfish motives. They readily availed themselves of his power to work miracles, when it was exercised on their behalf; but they paid no attention to his advice or warnings, when urged to reform the national worship.

154. The schools of the prophets, which are often mentioned during this period, deserve a brief notice. Some suppose that

[1] Amos ii. 12. [2] Lev. xiii. 46; Numb. v 1-4.
[3] This appears from the petition of the foreigners settled in Samaria by the Assyrians.
[4] Amos ii. 8; iv. 4

they originated soon after the conquest, if not, indeed, in the wilderness, but they first occur in history during the time of Samuel. Two of them were then in existence, one at Gibeah, "the hill of God," and another at Ramah; both in the tribe of Benjamin. The "sons," that is, *disciples* "of the prophets," as the students in these seminaries were called, usually went in procession from the house in which they lived to an altar situated on some high place in the neighbourhood. Several of their number led the way, playing on musical instruments; while the others, perhaps, accompanied them with the voice. *To prophesy*, therefore, in its restricted sense, meant *to sing the sacred songs common on these occasions.* Sometimes a Divine impulse made persons not belonging to the company of prophets join in their music: Saul and the messengers, whom he sent to seize David, are examples. Besides the processions to and from the high place, and the sacrifices or solemn meetings held there, the prophets practised sacred music, and received instruction in the law, under the eye of Samuel or some man venerable for years and piety. It is evident from this account of the institution that it owed its origin to unsettled times, when the Levites could not be consulted or sacrifices offered at the appointed place. Hence we can understand why the schools of the prophets disappear entirely during the reigns of David and Solomon: Levites discharged their duty, and pious men could sacrifice in the tabernacle or temple. The line of policy followed by the kings of Israel revived these seminaries. Mention is made of one hundred prophets hid by Obadiah during the persecution under Ahab, and of altars to Jehovah on Carmel and other places: these things prove that Elijah or some other prophet had again instituted schools. At a later period schools existed at Gilgal, attended by one hundred students; at Jericho, attended by upwards of fifty; at Bethel, and at Samaria. Perhaps there was one on Carmel also; for that mountain was not far from Shunem, where a kind-hearted woman accommodated the prophet with a room during his frequent visits to the neighbourhood. Elisha appears to have superintended all these seminaries; for nothing of greater im-

portance could have kept him constantly moving from place to place. His students lived in a building, erected by themselves, and enlarged, when necessary, to accommodate an increased attendance. A pot, of sufficient size to prepare a small supply of food for the whole company, is mentioned among the furniture of the schools; and believers from distant parts brought first-fruits to the man of God Married as well as unmarried men attended these seminaries; the students even engaged in business; and one was so unfortunate that his widow, unable to pay his debts, besought Elisha to save her two sons from being sold as slaves. In cases of doubt or difficulty application was always made to Elisha for help: Gehazi pretended to Naaman that two sons of the prophets had come from Mount Ephraim, and had applied to his master for some money and clothes, a request perhaps frequently made to the prophet. Sometimes these students were employed to anoint kings in the name of Jehovah, or to convey warnings, reproofs, and encouragement; but in matters of great importance Elisha acted without their assistance. It must not be supposed, however, that prophets were taken from these seminaries of education exclusively. Amos "was neither a prophet nor a prophet's son, but a herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit." Elisha, when called to be the successor of Elijah, was found by that prophet ploughing in the field, though it ought not to be inferred from that, as is usually done, that he had not been trained in some school of the prophets: he is spoken of, indeed, as a person well known to Elijah before his appointment to this high office. The distinction between a *prophet* and *a son of the prophets* should not be overlooked. The former was inspired, the latter was not; the one was master, the other servant; the prophet was taught of God, the sons of the prophets were taught of men.

155. After Elijah's unsuccessful attempt to reform the ten tribes, he withdrew to Horeb the mount of God. This is the first recorded visit of a Hebrew to that celebrated spot since the time of Moses; it was beyond the limits of the promised land, and does not on that account appear to have been one of the

sacred places frequented by the people of Israel. Pilgrimages were made to Bethel, Gilgal, Gibeon, and other places; vows were paid, assemblies held, and sacrifices offered there; but Horeb was never visited for these purposes. Some of the settlers in Elath, while it remained in possession of Judah, if not Solomon himself, on his journey to that town, may have occasionally visited the mountain; but history is silent on the subject. Only one pilgrim is mentioned after Moses; only one great event after the giving of the law. The hill was sacred, and was reserved for revelations of important changes in the spiritual world. Elijah expected that the people of Israel would be converted at once on Mount Carmel by some miraculous display of God's power. He was thinking of the passage through the Red Sea, and the strong wind that raised walls of water on either hand; of the thunders and lightnings by which the enemies of Israel were often struck dead, and of the earthquakes which deprived heathen armies of their courage, and left them an easy prey to the chosen people. But he was taught on Horeb, that the heart is not changed by such events: God is in them to deliver or astonish, not to convert. Elijah was made to feel this in a most impressive manner; and, when thus prepared for the important truth, a still small voice spoke home to his conscience, and charged him with faithlessness in fleeing from his native land. The work which he was commissioned to perform had been left undone through fear. Conscience was roused to activity; and, as usually happens in such cases, Elijah offered excuses for failing to discharge his duty. It is not difficult to interpret this strange interview. Elijah had expected a revolution, a sudden overthrow of heathenism, wonders in heaven above and in the earth beneath; but Jehovah is not in these. When conversion takes place, it is effected by the Spirit working on the conscience, convicting of sin by its still small voice, and furnishing a remedy. Elijah was taught this great truth on Horeb; and returned to Samaria a more enlightened man to labour for the welfare of his perishing countrymen. It is worthy of remark respecting this prophet, that his translation

furnished the Hebrews with an unanswerable proof of the existence of a future state.

The dates given in the preceding articles are subject to great uncertainty, owing chiefly to the difficulty of determining with precision the interval between the passage of the Jordan by the Hebrews under Joshua, and the elevation of Saul to the throne. It was shown already that this interval, according to the date given in 1 Kings vi. 1, was 337 years; but the accuracy of that date has been denied. Many writers assert that it was introduced into Hebrew Bibles about the third century after Christ, though they do not profess to explain for what purpose, or by whom. They maintain, therefore, that the period, during which the Judges ruled, must be found by adding together the intervals of peace and slavery as was done at page 64. But there is one fact in the book of Judges which ought to settle this point. Jephthah said that the Hebrews had possessed eastern Palestine for three hundred years, when they revolted from the children of Ammon (Judg. xi. 26). Now, if the periods of peace and slavery which preceded that revolt be added together, the sum will be 319 years. But the administrations of Joshua, and of the elders who outlived him, are not included in this reckoning. Suppose with Josephus (*Antiq.* v. 1. 29) that Joshua ruled for 25 years, and add 25 years more for the interval between his death and the administration of Othniel. In this way about 369 years elapsed between the passage of the Jordan, and the revolt from Ammon; but Jephthah says that the interval was only 300 years, and the ordinary mode of speaking in round numbers cannot explain a difference of 69 years. Manifestly, therefore, the interval sought is not found by adding together the periods of peace and slavery; and it is much safer to retain the date given in 1 Kings vi. 1.

Several events took place in profane history before the founding of the temple, of which the dates may be regarded as at least probable.

1192 B.C.—Expedition of the Greeks against Troy. Contemporary Hebrew judges were perhaps Samson and Eli.

1183.—Troy taken after a siege of ten years.

1015 (or 915).—Smyrna founded by Greek colonists. Solomon ascended the throne about the same time.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM UZZIAH TO HEZEKIAH.

JUDAH. 156. In the period from Uzziah to Hezekiah we have not only the historical books to guide us, but also the

writings of several prophets. The former relate chiefly the events of each reign, but the account they give of the state of manners and religion is very brief: the latter, on the contrary, contain a vivid, sometimes a fearful picture of the wickedness that prevailed in Judah. As the national prosperity declined, the prophetic intimations of future glory became more clear. During David and Solomon's brilliant reigns, people were content with the merely outward splendours of the court and kingdom; but when enemies invaded the country, when the nation was crushed beneath a foreign foe, and everything that men loved or honoured was spoiled, prophets were sent to promise a glorious future, and to turn attention from the outward to the inward. This was especially marked in the period of the history on which we are about to enter.

UZZIAH, 808-756 B.C.

157. Uzziah or Azariah succeeded his father Amaziah, and restored Judah, in some measure, to the greatness which it formerly enjoyed. During his minority, the Edomites, "casting off all pity," cruelly ravaged the south of Judah, and instigated the Philistines to fall on the west: Tyre, forgetting the brotherly covenant of Solomon's time, assisted these invaders in plundering the country and carrying off captives. The prophet Amos ascribes these calamities to the contempt of the Jews for the law of God, and to the gross idolatry of Amaziah's reign. At length Uzziah assumed the offensive. He recovered and fortified Elath: Gath and Ashdod were taken, and perhaps the country in their neighbourhood as far as the Mediterranean was conquered. Some Arabian tribes in the south of Judah, Gurbaal and the Mehunims, were reduced to subjection, which probably secured unmolested communication with the garrison of Elath. Uzziah even crossed the Jordan, and subdued Ammon. But the king was not less mindful of internal affairs than of foreign conquests. He put the kingdom in a state of defence, by building fortresses and thoroughly equipping his army: he also dug wells in the southern desert, probably for the convenience of caravans to and from Elath; agriculture was encouraged, and all the arts connected with it and with war. But prosperity

begat pride, for Uzziah aspired to the priest's office, and attempted to burn incense in the temple. A leprosy, which afflicted him during the remainder of his life, punished his pride and obstinacy. Jotham, the heir-apparent, administered the affairs of state during the long illness of his father. A prophet named Zechariah guided Uzziah in religious matters, for some years at the commencement of his reign.—(2 Kings xiv. 21, 22; xv. 1-7; 2 Chron. xxvi.)

JOTHAM, 756-742 B.C.

158. Jotham was not less prosperous than his father. He continued to fortify the cities of Judah, and built strongholds in the *forests* of the country. But fortifications were a sign of distrust in God, and Hosea declared, "Judah hath multiplied fenced cities, but I will send a fire upon his cities" (Hos. viii. 14). The Ammonites rebelled, but were compelled to pay a heavy tribute. Isaiah prophesied under Jotham.—(2 Kings xv. 32-38; 2 Chron. xxvii.)

AHAZ, 742-726 B.C.

159. Ahaz, the son of Jotham, succeeded: idolatry proved his ruin. In the beginning of his reign, Pekah king of Israel, and Rezin king of Syria, invaded Judah, intending to depose Ahaz, and set a creature of their own on the throne of his kingdom. A battle was fought, in which 120,000 Jews with some of the chief men perished: the king was besieged in Jerusalem; the country was ravaged, and 200,000 women and children led into slavery: but a prophet of Jehovah persuaded the ten tribes to set these miserable persons at liberty. The allies were soon compelled to raise the siege of Jerusalem; for Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, was hired by Ahaz to deliver him from his enemies; and an Assyrian army captured Damascus, slew Rezin, and ravaged Naphtali, Galilee, and Gilead. Ahaz visited the king of Assyria at Damascus, and committed the unspeakable folly of worshipping the gods of the Syrians, which had been unable to save Syria itself from Tiglath-pileser. He even introduced these idols into Jerusalem, through the agency of Urijah, the high-priest.[1] Other punishments befell the infatuated king. The Philistines wrested from

[1] Isaiah calls this man "a faithful witness" in one of his symbolical predictions (viii 2).

him some of the strongest fortresses of Judah; Edom twice invaded the south, and carried away much spoil and many captives, while the Assyrians, instead of helping their weak ally, plundered his country and capital. In vain did Isaiah denounce the alliance with Assyria, and preach repentance; he addressed an unbelieving audience. The temple was not only shut up during these calamities, but part of it was burned;[1] the cities of Judah were desolate, and the population thoroughly dispirited. Isaiah comforted the people by describing the glories of Messiah's reign, and the vengeance which would then be taken on their enemies. Subjection to Edom grieved them most of all;[2] but Messiah would tread the wine-press in Bozrah its chief city, and stain his garments with blood. The present was made to foreshadow the future: the vengeance Judah wished, the work Messiah would accomplish.—(2 Kings xvi.; 2 Chron. xxviii.)

HEZEKIAH, 726-697 B.C.

160. A gleam of sunshine burst upon the nation during the following reign. Hezekiah restored the worship of Jehovah, and celebrated the greatest passover that had been held in Israel since the time of Solomon. As the temple had been defiled, and was now fallen into decay through the negligence of Ahaz, it was not possible to keep this festival at the proper time in the first month; but provision was made for such cases in the law,[3] and Hezekiah held the feast on the fourteenth day of the second, instead of the first month. The people, it is said, rejoiced at the reformation, but not a few of the priests were idolaters at heart, and their obedience was only outward. Many subjects of Hoshea, king of the ten tribes, who were present in Jerusalem at this feast, overthrew the heathen altars on returning to their native country: the manner in which Scripture speaks of Hoshea, renders it probable that they had permission from him to destroy these monuments of idolatry. Prosperity also attended the arms of Hezekiah against the Philistines, for he subdued a large part of their country. In the eighth year of his reign he refused to pay the annual tribute to Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, who was pre-

[1] Isa. lxiv. 10, 11. [2] Ps. cxxxvii. 7. [3] Numb. ix. 9-12.

vented by a five years' war with Tyre from punishing his audacity. At length, in the fourteenth year of Hezekiah, Sennacherib invaded the country. The kingdom had been put in a state of defence; but most of the cities of Judah were soon taken; and while the Assyrian king was besieging Lachish,[1] Hezekiah submitted, and stripped the temple and palace of their treasures to satisfy Sennacherib. The Assyrian discovered, however, that Judah had entered into alliance with Egypt, and Rabshakeh was sent to Jerusalem to demand the surrender of the city. But the Egyptians were on their march to relieve Judah, and Sennacherib collected his forces to oppose them. A short breathing time was thus given to Hezekiah; and perhaps the distemper, which threatened to cut short his days, then befell him, as a punishment for the alliance he had formed with Egypt. In the meantime, Jehovah miraculously cut off the flower of the Assyrian army in a single night, by a "blast," which was probably the dreaded wind of the desert;[2] and Sennacherib returned with shame to his own country. The only other event of importance that is recorded of Hezekiah, is the embassy he received from Merodach-Baladan,[3] king of Babylon. That prince was the ruler of a nation long distinguished for the cultivation of astronomy; and his curiosity was excited by the backward motion of the shadow on the dial when Hezekiah recovered from his illness.—(2 Kings xviii.-xx.; 2 Chron. xxix.-xxxii.)

ISRAEL.

SHALLUM TO HOSHEA, 770-721 B.C.

161. The treason of Shallum, like that of Zimri, soon met with its reward. Menahem rebelled against the new king, and put him to death, after a brief reign of one month. The kingdom of Assyria now appears for the first time in the history of Israel. It had flourished for many ages, and had undergone many revolutions; but its sovereigns do not seem to have extended their conquests beyond the Euphrates. Tiphsah on that river, formerly

[1] A division of the army was sent under Tartan to capture Ashdod; Isa xx. 1.

[2] Isa. xxxvii. 7; Jer. li. 1.

[3] Merodach, *the planet Mars*, worshipped by the Babylonians; Baladan, *whose lord is Bel* or *Baal*.

the most northern point of Solomon's dominions, was probably the cause of the collision between Menahem and the king of Assyria. Jeroboam II. had taken Hamath, and added the Valley of the Leontes to the country of the ten tribes. Menahem imitated his predecessor, by again reducing the whole valley from Tirzah northward under the power of Israel, and even crossing the desert by the usual caravan road through Tadmor, to capture Tiphsah. His success and cruelty drew down the vengeance of Pul, king of Assyria, upon the ten tribes. Their country was invaded, and forced to pay a heavy tribute to the conqueror. Menahem died after a reign of eleven years, and was succeeded by his son Pekahiah. Another dynasty soon ascended the throne; for that prince was murdered by Pekah, one of his own officers, assisted by some inhabitants of Gilead. Towards the end of his reign, Pekah cruelly ravaged Judah, and even entered into an alliance with Rezin, king of Syria, to depose its weak sovereign, Ahaz: Isaiah calls them smoking firebrands. But the king of Assyria, to whom both of them should have paid tribute, again made his appearance with a large army in the country west of the Euphrates. Damascus lost its independence, and the inhabitants of one-half of Israel were carried captives to Assyria.[1] These calamities destroyed the popularity of Pekah, and he was put to death about two years after, by Hoshea, the last king of Israel, (738 B.C.) Nine years, however, elapsed before Hoshea ascended the throne of Israel. Affairs may have been managed by the nobles, or some competitor may have contested the crown; but an interregnum of nine years could not have been favourable to the prosperity of the nation. Subjection to a foreign country was always regarded as an intolerable evil by the Hebrews; and Hoshea knew that his only hope of retaining the throne lay in rebelling against Assyria. With that intention, he formed an alliance with So (Sevechus), king of Egypt, and no longer paid the annual tribute formerly sent to Nineveh. In vain did Isaiah denounce this and all other alliances with Egypt: neither kings nor people believed that "their

[1] All eastern Palestine (compare 1 Chron. v. 6), all Galilee, and Naphtali.

strength was to sit still." Hoshea probably received this warning from the prophet, because he was the only king of Israel who showed signs of repentance and reformation: but sentence had gone forth against the nation. Shalmaneser invaded the land, took Samaria after a siege of three years, removed the remainder of the people to Media, and shut up the king in prison.[1] It is not likely that all the inhabitants of a country would be removed in such cases; the king, the nobility, the men of influence and war would certainly be taken away, but the poorer classes would be left behind.[2] Shalmaneser, and afterwards Esar-haddon, peopled the deserted cities of Samaria with captives from other countries, who introduced the worship of heathen gods into their new settlements. But Samaria was part of the Holy Land, and even strangers living in it were bound to obey the Mosaic law, as the heathen inhabitants soon discovered. They applied to the king of Assyria, who sent a priest of Bethel to teach them "how they should fear the Lord:" their idols, their high places, and their priests were retained notwithstanding.—(2 Kings xv. 10-31; xvii.; 2 Chron. xxviii. 6-15.)

162. The kingdom of the ten tribes existed for 254 years; and eight different families, excluding Zimri's, exercised sovereign power during that period. The average length of the reign of the eighteen kings of Israel was only thirteen years; while the average for the twelve kings of Judah, in the same time, was twenty-three. Israel was thrice distracted by civil dissensions, which continued six, eleven, and nine years respectively: seven of its kings were murdered by their successors, and one was killed in battle. We cannot suppose, from these facts, that the people enjoyed little or no prosperity after the revolt from Rehoboam. The inspired writers record the sins of the people, and explain from first to last why they were rooted out of Palestine: but we may infer, from the large armies and extensive conquests of several of the kings, that the population

[1] Moab seems to have been terribly ravaged during this invasion; Isaiah xiv. 28-xvi. 14.

[2] There is little reason to doubt, that Hebrews continued to inhabit Galilee from the age of Joshua to that of our Lord, although it has been made a question when they first settled in it after the captivity.

and prosperity of the country were sometimes very great. Famine and pestilence, the usual attendants of war, not unfrequently swept over the land, and cut off numbers of the people; but no nation escapes these scourges of the Almighty.

163. The sins which caused the captivity of the ten tribes are briefly summed up in 2 Kings xvii. 6-23. Jeroboam's wickedness, in setting up two golden calves, was the great iniquity of the nation: Baal-worship, and the worship of the heavenly bodies, were also practised, although the law ordered every one who was guilty of these crimes to be put to death. Enchanters and soothsayers were consulted by the deluded people; and children were made to pass through the fire in honour of Moloch. Prophets, illustrious for miracles and faith, preached in vain against the corruptions of their age: many of the people were turned from idolatry by their means, but the majority of the nation remained unaffected. Not only were the warnings and entreaties of the most distinguished prophets despised, but several of them (Elijah, Elisha, Micaiah, and Amos) were threatened with death for their faithfulness. Love of idols and disregard for Jehovah's servants at last filled the cup of the nation's crimes to the brim.

164. About a hundred years after the overthrow of the monarchy, the heathen temple and the image of Ashtoreth at Bethel were burned, and the altar of Jeroboam thrown down by Josiah, king of Judah; but the golden calf is not mentioned among the monuments of heathenism which he destroyed. Probably, therefore, the tradition of the Jewish rabbins on the subject is correct, that Tiglath-pileser carried away the calf at Dan (740 B.C.), and Shalmaneser that at Bethel about ten years later.[1] The recent discoveries at Nineveh prove that the kings of Assyria paid little respect to the gods of conquered countries, especially if they were made of gold or silver. On one piece of sculpture representing the sack of a city, some men appear hewing a human figure in pieces with hatchets: it is supposed to be a golden image, which they are either dividing among them-

[1] Hos. x. 6.—"For a present to king Jareb," *i.e.*, Sennacherib, his successor, probably by a play upon the last two syllables.

selves, or cutting up for the king's treasurer. This was perhaps the fate of the golden calves.

165. The moral state of the Hebrews during a great part of this period, as we learn from the prophets, was extremely low. Although Uzziah, Jotham, and Hezekiah were men of piety and devoted to the service of Jehovah, their example was not copied by the people: heathen altars and images were removed, and the worship of God again established in Judah; but the change was only outward, for the hearts of the people were unaffected by it. Samaria also enjoyed an outward reformation under the dynasty of Jehu, though the golden calves were still retained. In both kingdoms, however, "the people did still corruptly;" and the writings of Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah, who then flourished, show the mournful excesses into which they ran. Drunkenness was one of the great national sins. Every class of the community was addicted to it, the husbandman in his merry-making, the prophet who pretended to reveal the will of God, and the monarch at the council-table or the festive board.[1] The whole day, from early morning to nightfall, was spent in carousing and music;[2] decency was sometimes outraged by the scenes then witnessed;[3] the "fading flower" of the drunkard's chaplet was an image used by the poets; and justice could not be administered by judges, who attempted to discharge their duties when under the influence of wine.[4] The poor and fatherless were plundered at the judgment-seat; bribes were taken, and even asked as the price of favourable decisions;[5] and blood was shed without compunction.[6] "Truth was fallen in the street;" "mercy and knowledge of God" were unknown, and the upright man was the prey of the wicked.[7] "Whoredom, and wine, and new wine, had taken away the heart."[8] Reproofs for wrong-doing were resented as hateful insults: to speak truth was reckoned an abomination.[9] "The days of

[1] Isa. xxviii. 7, 8; Mic. ii. 11; Hos. vii. 5.
[2] Isa. v. 11, 12.
[3] Isa. xxviii. 8; Amos vi. 4-6.
[4] Isa. xxviii. 7.
[5] Isa. v. 23; Mic. vii. 3; Hos. iv. 18; Amos v. 11, 12.
[6] Mic. iii. 9, 10.
[7] Isa. lix. 14, 15.
[8] Hos. iv. 11.
[9] Amos v. 10.

Gibeah," when the vilest wickedness was not only perpetrated by a few, but countenanced by a whole community, seemed to have returned.[1] Even the cities of refuge were no longer safe: Ramoth-gilead "was polluted with blood," and the roads leading to Shechem were infested with robber-priests.[2]

166. The pride and haughtiness of the powerful were as severely censured as their drunken habits; they despised the poor, and even pretended to believe that they could conceal their intentions and doings from Jehovah himself. To increase the dignity of the nobles, vineyards were seized, possessions unduly extended, and restitution of heritages at the jubilee refused.[3] Micah gives a very lively picture of their harsh dealings with the lower classes:—they "also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron."[4] Few of the leading men were free from these sins,—"the best of them is a brier; the most upright sharper than a thorn hedge."[5] Eliakim, the chamberlain of Hezekiah, maintained a consistent and upright walk, notwithstanding the wickedness of the times; but Shebna, the secretary, was threatened with heavy judgments for his pride and iniquity.

167. Injustice and violence had sapped the foundations of public confidence. A friend could not be trusted, and the husband was betrayed by his wife.[6] Neighbours overreached each other in ordinary matters of business, "with wicked balances and the bag of deceitful weights."[7] One, intimately acquainted with the treachery and wickedness that prevailed, says, "The good man is perished out of the earth, and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood, they hunt every man his brother with a net."[8] Another, shocked at the impiety of the court and people, declared that "except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, we should have been like unto Gomorrah,"[9]—

[1] Hos. ix. 9. [2] Hos. vi. 8, 9. [3] Mic. ii. 2.
[4] Mic iii. 3. [5] Mic. vii. 4. [6] Mic. vi. 12; vii. 5, 6.
[7] Mic. vi. 11; Amos viii. 5. [8] Mic. vii. 2. [9] Isa. i. 9.

that is, if another Abraham had arisen to plead for Jerusalem, he would scarcely have found ten righteous persons in it.

168. The luxurious habits of the people during this period are sometimes severely censured by the prophets. Ladies of rank wore ankle-bands to attract attention by tinkling as they walked along, and bound the ankles loosely together with a silver chain to give themselves a mincing gait. Amulets were also worn to guard against incantations, and little moons were used as ornaments in imitation of the eastern heathen.[1]

169. Pure religion could not flourish in such a community: men had forsaken God, and now he had forsaken them. The Sabbath was broken, but that had not yet become the crying sin of the times. It appears that the sacrifices prescribed in the law were regularly offered during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, and Hezekiah, and the worship of Jehovah outwardly observed; but "he that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol."[2] The law was broken with impunity. Altars were built of brick instead of unhewn stone; and every grove on the mountains was the scene of forbidden worship, and gross immorality. Offerings were also presented to Baal, under the names of Gad and Meni, as the giver of good fortune—a practice probably taken from the Phœnicians. Altars to false gods were built during the reign of Ahaz in every corner of Jerusalem, and incense was offered to the brazen serpent made by Moses in the wilderness. So shameful did this serpent-worship appear to Hezekiah, that he broke the image in pieces, and called it in contempt "a thing of brass." Children were burned to Moloch in the valley of Hinnom, and other places witnessed the same dreadful sacrifices.[3] Men were so indifferent or hardened that it became a common saying with some, "Is not Jehovah among us? none evil can come upon us;"[4] and with others, "Who seeth us, and who knoweth us?"[5] Hypocrisy and

[1] Isa. iii. 18-26 contains a full account of these and other articles of dress.
[2] Isa. lxvi. 3. [3] Isa. lvii. 5. [4] Mic. iii. 11. [5] Isa. xxix. 15.

superstition were in consequence extensively prevalent among the people. Pretended revelations from God could be bought from false prophets; and a charge of impiety was forged against those who would not countenance the deceit. Priests were equally guilty of acquiring money by unlawful means; they flattered for a bribe; and sought gold rather than the approbation of God. Wizards, soothsayers, and fortune-tellers found a rich harvest among the deluded people; and, whatever were the particular forms under which they cloaked their falsehoods, it is certain that ventriloquism was one of them.[2] Jehovah "was pressed under the nation, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves."[3]

170. So dreadful is the picture of society sketched in the preceding articles, that a reader might suspect the prophets of poetical exaggeration. But, apart from the corruption that they describe, there is no ground for entertaining this idea. Four independent witnesses, living in different places, and moving in different ranks of life, unanimously testify to the fearful wickedness of the times. Isaiah was a courtier, and Amos a herdsman: the former lived in Jerusalem, the latter was born in Tekoa, and travelled through Palestine: Micah belonged to the western parts of Judah, and Hosea to Israel. Each endeavours to paint the wickedness of the community in blacker tints than another; but they agree in the minutest particulars, as may be seen from the references given to their writings. One feels, therefore, that he is not reading poetry, but history: not exaggerated statements of petty faults, but unadorned facts. Four poets could not have agreed in using the same language to condemn the same sins unless realities, not fiction, had been before their minds.

171. But there was one source of consolation, to which pious Hebrews could turn amid the prevailing wickedness and idolatry: the promises of a Messiah, which they had received from antiquity, were greatly enlarged in this period. When the kingdom

[1] Mic. iii. 5, 11.
[2] Isa. viii. 19; xxix. 4: "The voice out of the ground."
[3] Amos ii. 13.

of Judah was sinking under the attacks of enemies on every side, prophets revived the drooping spirits of their countrymen by pointing to the triumphs of the Redeemer. Isaiah and Micah describe him as God over all, the everlasting King, and yet as a man who should be born in Bethlehem, live a troubled life, and at last be laid in the grave. David had already uttered similar predictions in few and mysterious words; but in this age the voice of prophecy became as full and clear as the nature of things permitted. The kingly office of the Deliverer afforded pious Hebrews strong grounds for consolation in the calamitous state of the kingdom of Judah. Isaiah encouraged them to fix their eyes on the future; Messiah should tread the wine-press in Bozrah, and stain all his garments with the blood of Israel's enemies; he should lead forth his people from captivity, but not in haste and fear like Moses; he should rule among kings; and the miseries which had afflicted Judah for many years should cease, under his peaceful sceptre. His power should be greater than David's, his wisdom than Solomon's; all nations would submit to the one, and flock to hear the other: in short, he should be a teacher or prophet as well as a king. The nature of his work as a priest was also fully revealed. Isaiah describes him as substituted in place of sinners, bearing their guilt, and pleading their cause with God. He also calls him the Redeemer, or Purchaser of Israel; and narrates in the richest language the blessings which he would bestow on mankind. The dark clouds which were settling on the kingdom of Judah seem edged with brilliance; as if the sun, though then obscured for a little, would soon burst out in more dazzling brightness than ever.

172. The history of the Hebrew kingdoms during this period became involved with that of Assyria, or, to prevent confusion of ideas, Nineveh. Assyria proper was bounded by the Tigris on the west, Susiana on the south, Media on the east, and Armenia on the north; but the empire was far more extensive. Nineveh, the capital of the kingdom, was situated on the left bank of the Tigris, about 280 miles to the north of Babylon,

and 500 from the Persian Gulf: Baghdad, also situated on the Tigris not far from the ancient Ctesiphon (Calneh), is 220 miles south of the site of Nineveh. When the Assyrian empire was at its greatest splendour, Nineveh is said to have covered an area of 200 square miles, or nearly twice as many as London; and its population was perhaps upwards of half a million. Long before the time of Abraham, this city was the metropolis of a great kingdom, but Scripture seldom mentions its sovereigns or conquests, because they had no influence on the development of the Church. Asshur, who founded the kingdom, and Chushan-Rishathaim, who first oppressed the Israelites after their settlement in Palestine, are the only Assyrian monarchs whose names are found in Scripture before the reign of Menahem: perhaps the four kings who invaded Palestine in the time of Abraham, also conducted an Assyrian army. Greek authors relate that the Medes, after being subject to Assyria for many years, threw off the yoke during the reign of Sardanapalus in the ninth century before Christ, and succeeded in placing their leader Arbaces on the throne of Nineveh. The names of nearly all his successors, down to the destruction of the monarchy, are found in Scripture; they were perhaps as follows:—

Pul,	. . .	from 774 B.C.,	reigned	21 years	(probably).
Tiglath-pileser,	„ 753	„	„ 19	„	(753 B.C.—Founding of Rome.)
Shalmaneser,	„ 734	„	„ 14	„	Conquered Sidon, Acre, Cyprus, Samaria (721).
Sennacherib,	„ 720	„	„ 37	„	Sargon? Isa. xx. 1.
Esarhaddon,	about 683	„	„ 16	„	Conquered Babylon (680).
Sardochaeus,	„ 667	„	„ 20	„	Second Revolt of Media (665).
Chyniladan,	„ 647	„	„ 22	„	

173. About 625 B.C., Nabopolassar became king of Babylon; but history has not recorded any particulars of his previous life. Having made himself master of the country between Babylon and the Persian Gulf, he marched against Nineveh, which he sacked, but did not altogether destroy. Nahum has described the storming and capture of the city. The conqueror is sometimes called king of Assyria, for with the capital he gained possession of all the conquests of that empire.

174. Of late years, additional light has been thrown upon Assyrian history, by discoveries made on the sites of ancient Nineveh and Babylon. Monuments and sculptures of the greatest value have been found buried in the vast mounds of rubbish, which were once merely a source of amazement to the traveller, and of terror to the neighbourhood. When the inscriptions written on these remains of ancient art shall have been fully read, a new and interesting chapter in the history of the world will be rescued from oblivion. The pictures, which accompany the inscriptions, and represent the events they record, require in general no interpretation—they speak for themselves. On some are seen the preparations for a feast in the kitchen of the palace; the guests sitting at table, and pledging each other in wine; mummers dressed in lions' skins, dancing to music; and horses feeding or being cleaned in the royal stables. The great king of Assyria is seen, attended by his sons and high officers of state, visiting some favourite country-house, engaging in lion or bull hunts, drinking or divining with a cup, riding in his chariot, and seated at table. But special attention was bestowed on the delineations of warlike subjects. Sieges are represented with a vividness that leaves nothing to be desired. The besieged are seen defending the fortifications; and sometimes a row of miserable victims impaled before the city show the fury of the conqueror. Wooden towers, manned by archers, and moving on wheels, are forced up inclined planes, till their summits are on a level with the top of the walls. Battering engines are also driven up the slopes, and stones are seen falling out of the walls under the blows of lance-headed rams. Scaling-ladders are planted against the fortifications: the besiegers crowd up the steps, and shelter themselves beneath wicker shields from the missiles of the enemy. Dead bodies are tumbling from the towers into the ditch below; and sometimes flames break out in the doomed city, or are applied to its gates. The fury of the assault, the supplicating attitude of the faint-hearted, the courage of despair, and the piteous lamentations of prisoners of war, are faithfully depicted on these interesting remains. Battle

scenes are equally vivid. Cavalry and chariots are seen charging the enemy, or pursuing the fugitives; bowmen, spearmen, and slingers advance against hostile ranks; single combats, in which Assyrians pass their swords through their opponents, are not uncommon; and the dead, sometimes headless, lie on the plain, or are trampled under the horses' feet. But victory is not always gained without loss, for even in flight the vanquished are seen turning upon their pursuers. Birds of prey also, to increase the truthful horror of the picture, hover over the field, and peck out the eyes or carry off the heads and entrails of the dead. Processions of tribute-bearers are of frequent occurrence. On one monument, double-humped camels, an elephant, monkeys, a richly caparisoned horse, manufactured goods, and baskets filled with valuable commodities, are borne by the natives of different countries to the king of Assyria.

175. A better idea of the value of these sculptures will be obtained, by illustrating from them one or two passages of Scripture. Thus, the prophet Isaiah is commanded to say to Sennacherib—"I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle on thy lips."[1] On an Assyrian monument, three prisoners, of whom one is on his knees, are represented before the king of Assyria. In one hand, the king holds the middle of a cord, which passes through rings in the under lips of the three men, and in the other a spear, with which he is putting out the eyes of the suppliant. He himself was dealt with in this way by Jehovah. Frequent references are made to high places and groves in Scripture; one of these is seen on the monuments—an altar built on a height near a royal palace, and surrounded by trees.[2] Eli "fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate:" the Assyrian artists represent people sitting on chairs without backs, and having their feet some distance from the ground; a person fainting on receiving bad news would of course fall from such chairs. One of the sieges represented on the Assyrian monuments seems to be that of Lachish by Sennacherib, and the tribute then paid by Hezekiah is put down on them at

[1] Isa. xxxvii. 29. [2] Hosea iv. 13.

30 talents of gold, and 800 talents of silver. Divining with the cup was another superstitious practice common in the East; and there are several pictures, in which the monarch, attended by his great officers, is apparently consulting the gods in this way. The richly-caparisoned horses, and their handsome riders, seen on the monuments, remind one of the "desirable young men riding upon horses," mentioned by the prophets in their expostulations with the Jews.

CHAPTER IX.

FROM MANASSEH TO ZEDEKIAH.

JUDAH. MANASSEH, 697-642 B.C.

176. THE reign of Manasseh forms an important era in the history of Judah: his sins are always spoken of as the chief cause of the sufferings and captivity which afterwards befell the nation. Nothing could ward off the punishment threatened against them; not even the intercession of Moses and Samuel, had they been alive.[1] "The righteous might be taken away from the evil to come," as Josiah was; but the wickedness and crimes of Manasseh were punished in the third and fourth generation, agreeably to the law. His mother's name was Hephzi-bah, at whose marriage with Hezekiah, Isaiah probably wrote the famous prophecy, "Zion! thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah (married); for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married: for as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee."[2] But Manasseh proved a miserable son to his native country.

177. A list of this prince's sins and crimes is given at the beginning of his reign: he was only twelve years of age when his father died, and some years elapsed before he was guilty of the iniquities referred to. *First*, He restored Baal-worship; *Second*, He profaned the house of God by erecting altars in its

[1] Jer. xv. 1-4. [2] Isaiah lxii. 4, 5.

two courts to the host of heaven, and setting up a wooden image in the temple itself; *Third*, He made his children pass through the fire in the valley of Hinnom; *Fourth*, He consulted wizards and enchanters; and, *Fifth*, He shed much innocent blood in Jerusalem. Horses and chariots (statues) were set up in honour of the sun; idolatrous priests, among whom were many Levites,[1] served at the heathen altars; and wickedness of every kind was so common that Manasseh surpassed not only the worst kings of Judah, but even the original inhabitants of the land. The planets were worshipped on the house-tops, and Moloch was invoked in solemn oaths as often as Jehovah. Justice was corrupted; vain and treacherous persons pretended to the gift of prophecy; and the sanctuary was polluted by the priests. God was thought to be an indifferent spectator of the prevailing wickedness and crimes: "Jehovah will not do good, neither will he do evil," had become a favourite proverb in Jerusalem.[2] Punishment at length fell on the land. An Assyrian army invaded Judah about the twenty-second year of Manasseh's reign (676 B.C.), and carried him a prisoner to Babylon, which had been conquered, a few years before, by Esar-haddon, king of Assyria.[3] In captivity and exile he humbled himself before Jehovah, and on regaining his liberty, restored the true worship in Jerusalem; but the reformation he effected was far from thorough. Only one prophet, named Hozai,[4] is mentioned in the history during this reign: Isaiah was alive at the beginning of it, and prophets or seers are said to have warned Manasseh of the evil consequences of his ways.—(2 Kings xxi. 1-18; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 1-19.)

178. Syria and Palestine were now the battle-field, on which the great monarchies of Egypt and Nineveh contended for the dominion of the world. An invasion of the territories of the one by the armies of the other was effected, by marching along the shore of the Mediterranean through the plain of Sharon and the

[1] Ezek. xliv. 10. [2] Zeph. i. 5, 12.
[3] Perhaps the prophecy in Isa. xxii. 15-19 was fulfilled at this time.
[4] 1 Chron. xxxiii. 19 (margin).

country of the Philistines: the centre of Judea was too mountainous and rugged for the passage of an army, in which large bodies of cavalry and chariots were employed. Ashdod, therefore, though much inferior in size and strength to Jerusalem, was reckoned the frontier fortress of the two monarchies, and required to be captured by an invading army. This city, of which broken arches and fragments of marble columns still mark the site, was built on the summit of a hill, about twenty-one miles south of Joppa. In the reign of Hezekiah it seems to have been held by the Egyptians, for Sennacherib sent Tartan with a division of the Assyrian army to besiege it. This fortress is not again mentioned in history until the middle of the reign of Manasseh, when it was garrisoned by the Assyrians. In the interval, Egypt, as well as Nineveh, had been weakened by civil discord or foreign wars; but in each of these kingdoms one monarch now ruled with a firm hand, and the contest for supremacy was renewed. Esar-haddon, the king of Assyria, had fortified Ashdod so strongly, that it sustained a siege of twenty-nine years from Psammetichus, king of Egypt, before surrendering. It can hardly be supposed, that Judah would be safe with a hostile army encamped for many years near its border: it is somewhat remarkable, at least, that Manasseh, after his return from Babylon, greatly strengthened the fortifications of Jerusalem and other cities in his dominions. After this time, Ashdod was a place of less consequence; the long siege which it sustained left the fortress a mere wreck, and Gaza became the key of Egypt.[1]

AMON. 642-640 B.C.

179. Amon, the son of Manasseh, imitated the wickedness of his father. He worshipped the carved images of that king, which do not appear to have been destroyed during the preceding period of reformation. A conspiracy was formed against him, and he was assassinated after a reign of two years. Josiah, his son, the only ornament of this dark period in Jewish history, succeeded in the ninth year of his age. About seven years after, he manifested an intention "to seek after the God of David his father."

[1] The fate of these fortresses was predicted by Zephaniah (ii. 4).

JOSIAH, 640-609 B.C. 180. In the twelfth year of Josiah's reign (628 B.C.), he thoroughly cleared not only Judah, but all western Palestine, of idolatrous altars and images; destroying the latter and burning the bones of heathen priests upon the former. Josiah appears to have been deputy under the king of Assyria or Babylon (Nabopolassar) of the whole country to the west of the Jordan; for it is inexplicable how he could have exercised authority "in the cities of Samaria," unless this had been the case. The reformation occupied six years: Zephaniah prophesied before it was begun, and perhaps assisted in carrying it on; Jeremiah entered on the prophetical office in the thirteenth year of Josiah, and may have encouraged the king in his efforts to overthrow heathenism. In thoroughly cleansing the long-neglected temple, the "book of the law" was found and read to the king. So deplorable had been the wickedness of king and priest in Judah, that this foundation of the true religion had been lost since Hezekiah's time, and the national faith was transmitted only in the sermons and writings of the prophets. The threatenings of the law so terrified the king, that he sent to Huldah, the prophetess, to inquire whether there were any hope of pardon; and resolved on reforming the national worship with more vigour. A passover, the greatest and most hearty that had ever been held in Israel, was then celebrated. Thirteen years of peace and prosperity were given to the nation, only to be followed by the most dreadful calamities. War then broke out between Pharaoh-Necho and Babylon; and the Egyptian king passed through Palestine on his way to Carchemish, landing his army at Accho to avoid a march along the sea-shore.[1] Josiah gave him battle at Megiddo, when the Hebrews were defeated, and Josiah so severely wounded that he died shortly after. His death excited the profoundest grief throughout the kingdom, especially among the godly portion of the community.[2] "He walked in the ways of David his father;" and Scripture takes

[1] Jer xlvii. 1-5. Gaza and Askelon were sacked on his return.

[2] The mourning of Hadadrimmon (Zech. xii. 11), was a phrase derived from this event, Hadadrimmon was a town near Megiddo.

special notice of his goodness—an honour which it bestows on no other successor of David, except Hezekiah.—(2 Kings xxi. 19–xxiii. 30; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 20–xxxv. 27.)

181. Shallum or Jehoahaz succeeded his father Josiah. He was deposed three months after by Pharaoh, on the successful termination of his campaign against Carchemish, and carried to Egypt, where he died.[1] Eliakim or Jehoiakim, an older son of Josiah, was made king in his stead. He built a splendid palace, but refused to pay the workmen their wages: "his heart was for covetousness, and for to shed innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence."[2] In the beginning of his reign, Urijah, a servant of Jehovah, predicted the destruction of the city and temple, and then fled to Egypt, where he was apprehended by the messengers of Jehoiakim and brought back to Judah. The king condemned him to death for his boldness in speaking in the name of God. Jeremiah narrowly escaped death at the same time; though with greater boldness and faith he confronted the princes and people. The wickedness, more than the idolatry of Jehoiakim, at last caused his ruin. In the year 606 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar, after defeating the Egyptian army on the Euphrates and re-taking Carchemish, conquered Judah and took Jerusalem. Many of the principal men, among whom Daniel is specially deserving of notice, were carried to Babylon with part of the vessels used in the temple service. Jehoiakim continued faithful to the conqueror for three years, when, trusting for help from Egypt, he rebelled. Nebuchadnezzar was prevented, by his contest with Pharaoh and by other wars, from punishing his tributary; but detachments of the Babylonian army, and bands of soldiers from the neighbouring nations ravaged the kingdom of Judah. Jehoiakim is said to have been besieged in Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and at last put to death;[3] but Scripture is silent on the subject. It was foretold that "he would be buried with the burial of an ass," and that

JEHOIAKIM, 609-599 B.C.

[1] Jer. xxii. 12.

[2] Jer. xxii. 17.

[3] He slew "king Jehoiakim, whom he commanded to be thrown before the walls without any burial."—Josephus, *Antiq.* x 6.

"his dead body should be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost." His father, Josiah, humbled himself when he heard the threatenings of the law read by his secretary; in strange contrast with this, Jehoiakim cut up with a pen-knife, and then thrust into the fire, the inspired writing of Jeremiah, which denounced severe punishment unless the king and people turned from their sins.—(2 Kings xxiii. 31–xxiv. 7; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 1-8.)

182. Coniah, Jeconiah, or Jehoiachin, the son of Jehoiakim, succeeded to the throne. His reign lasted only three months; but the wickedness of which he was guilty, drew down on him the penalty—"Write ye this man childless, for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah."[1] Nebuchadnezzar had now driven the Egyptians out of Asia, and Palestine fell entirely into his hands. Distrusting the fidelity of Coniah, he besieged Jerusalem. In a short time Coniah surrendered, and was carried to Babylon along with his mother,[2] 10,000 men of rank, and the *goodly* vessels of the temple. Ezekiel was among the captives: a thousand carpenters and smiths were also carried away from Judah, to prevent the people from fortifying their cities and providing themselves with arms. Thirty-seven years after, the unhappy king was released from prison by the successor of Nebuchadnezzar.

ZEDEKIAH, 597-587 B.C.

183. Zedekiah, a son of Josiah, was raised to the throne by the king of Babylon. False prophets, in Jerusalem and Chaldea, were constantly predicting the overthrow of Nebuchadnezzar's power, the return of the captives, and the restoration of the temple vessels; sometimes they had the hardihood to fix the date of deliverance. Hananiah, Ahab, Zedekiah, and Shemaiah,[3] were perhaps the leaders among these

[1] This is the only passage in the Bible that illustrates the apostle's statements regarding Melchizedek, "without father, without mother." Jeremiah says that Coniah would be *childless*, and immediately adds, *no man of his seed*, implying that he had a family, as we know was the case (Matt. i. 12). *Childless* means childless with respect to his regal dignity; none of his family should ever sit on the throne. What a bitter satire upon the king's name—*Jehoiachin, Jehovah has established him.*

[2] Jer. xxii. 26; compare with 2 Kings xxiv. 15.

[3] Ahab and Zedekiah, according to the prediction of Jeremiah, were burned by Nebu-

preachers of sedition and rebellion. Jeremiah, on the other hand, counselled submission to the conqueror, and promised peace as the result; but the advice was disregarded, although his prediction was fulfilled, that Hananiah should die within a certain time. In the beginning of his reign, Zedekiah was almost persuaded by these false prophets to form a confederacy with Edom, Moab, Tyre, and other nations against Babylon.[1] Wickedness and idolatry prevailed in Jerusalem: "the creeping things and abominable beasts" of Egypt were worshipped; the death of Tammuz, the Syrian Adonis, was lamented yearly by the women of Judah; the sun-worship of Persia was common in the temple, and the valley of Hinnom was filled with altars to Baal and Moloch.[2] At last Zedekiah rebelled, and Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah.[3] The Jews had entered into an alliance with Pharaoh-Hophra, and entertained the hope that he would save them from the consequences of their rebellion.[4] Several cities, besides the capital, among which Lachish and Azekah are specially mentioned,[5] had been strongly fortified, and the Chaldean army was delayed some time before them. Soon, however, the siege of Jerusalem was formed, and the people were glad to listen to Jeremiah. He exhorted them to observe the year of release, by setting free the Hebrew servants whom they unjustly detained in slavery. His advice was followed so long as the Chaldeans lay before the city; but when they broke up to meet the Egyptian army, which was advancing to Zedekiah's relief, things returned to their former state. Jeremiah's prediction, that the siege would be resumed, was treated with scorn, and he himself cast into a loathsome dungeon. At length the Chaldean army returned, and the wretched inhabitants of Jeru-

chadnezzar, because they prevented their countrymen from settling in the cities to which he had carried them.

[1] Jer. xxvii. [2] Ezek. viii.

[3] Ammon had rebelled at the same time, and Nebuchadnezzar used divination by arrows to determine against which nation he should first march. The names of the cities or kingdoms were written on several arrows, which were put into a quiver, and shaken together. An arrow was then drawn out, and the name on it determined the place to be attacked.—Ezek. xxi. 19-24.

[4] Ezek. xvii. 15. [5] Jer xxxiv 7.

salem were exposed to the worst horrors of war, pestilence, and famine. It was humiliating also to see their hereditary enemies and former subjects, the Edomites and Philistines, in the ranks of the besiegers; and to hear the insulting taunts with which they ridiculed their misfortunes. Zedekiah would have surrendered, but his nobles were determined to hold out to the utmost; and he himself was afraid of the Jews whom his misgovernment and rebellion had driven into the service of Nebuchadnezzar.[1] The second siege continued some months, during which the inhabitants were caused "to eat the flesh of their sons. and the flesh of their daughters, and the flesh of their acquaintances." At last the Chaldeans effected an entrance into the city; and Zedekiah fled with the intention of gaining the eastern desert, where he might have escaped the vengeance of the conqueror. He was pursued and taken near Jericho, and the invaders returned to complete the destruction and pillage of Jerusalem. Zedekiah was carried to Riblah, where Nebuchadnezzar cruelly made him witness the execution of his own sons, and then ordered his eyes to be put out. He was afterwards taken to Babylon, where it is supposed he died.—(2 Kings xxiv. 17–xxv. 21; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 10-21.)

184. It is unnecessary to repeat at the end of this chapter the list of crimes and misdeeds which prevailed in Jerusalem during the period we have reviewed. Zephaniah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel draw the same picture of these times that Isaiah and Micah do of the preceding age; and yet there was a remarkable difference between the two periods. From Uzziah to Hezekiah there was only one bad king: from Manasseh to Zedekiah, nearly the same space of time, there was only a single good one. In the former period, Ahaz shut up the temple, and allowed it to fall into decay: in the latter, the temple was devoted to heathen worship, or to the outward service of Jehovah, and additions were even made to its splendour.[2] Under Ahaz, the feasts and fasts were not observed; under Jehoiakim at least, the Jews assembled from all their cities to keep both. It

[1] Jer. xxxviii. 19, 20.

[2] Jer. xxxvi. 10.

is singular that the kings were either unable or unwilling to enforce obedience to the law, which forbade the offering of sacrifices anywhere except before the ark. This law was violated by Solomon at the very time he received the gift of wisdom from Jehovah; and Elijah, the greatest prophet that had appeared since Moses, sanctioned the unlawful practice. The high places of Solomon, in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, were such resorts of the people, that the good kings did not venture to remove them for upwards of 300 years, until Josiah, in the darkest period of Jewish history, threw down the altars there erected. False prophets flourished during the age from Uzziah to Hezekiah; but, towards the close of the monarchy, they greatly increased in numbers and insolence. They were then in league with the priests, and once nearly succeeded in effecting the murder of Jeremiah. They resembled the deceivers and flatterers of other kingdoms, who speak what will prove acceptable to royal ears, not advantageous to the nation; but they pretended that their information was received from God. So corrupt had the people become under the teaching and errors of these prophets, that they could not distinguish truth from falsehood. "*Every* vision faileth," they said, Jeremiah's as well as Hananiah's; "the days are prolonged," in spite of God's threatenings to the contrary.

185. Believers during this period were favoured with several revelations regarding the Messiah. Isaiah died at its commencement; Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel flourished near and after its close. Prophecy had already revealed the person and work of Messiah, the nature of his kingdom and the happiness of his subjects: it still dwelt on these points though not at great length:[1] warnings and threatenings against the sinfulness of the times took their place in the sermons of the prophets. Daniel, however, placed the nature of Christ's kingdom in a new light: in the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's first dream, he brought out more clearly than any who preceded him, the triumph of Messiah's kingdom over all the

[1] Jer. xxiii. 6; Ezek. xxxiv. 23; xxxvii. 24.

nations of the earth. This is the only new feature in the prophecies relating to the Saviour; for the other predictions of Daniel belong to a later period.

186. Jeremiah prophesied that the captivity should last *seventy* years, "until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths, for, as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath to fulfil threescore years and ten." According to the law every seventh year should have been a Sabbath of rest to the land. Now, seventy Sabbaths of rest would occur in a period of 490 years, and this was exactly the time that elapsed between the beginning of Saul's reign (1096 B.C.) and the first captivity, from which Jeremiah reckons (606 B.C.) It does not by any means follow from this, that the seventh year of rest had not been observed during the whole of that long interval; but the coincidence is sufficiently striking to prove, that in general the precept was shamefully neglected. Other commands, as plainly revealed in the law, had not been observed for a much longer time. At the feast of tabernacles the Hebrews were ordered to dwell in booths decorated with palm-trees, in remembrance of the sojourn in the wilderness; but the precept was either violated or forgotten from the conquest to the time of Ezra.[1]

CHAPTER IX.

THE CAPTIVITY.

187. THE history of the Jews during the captivity is the history of three branches of the same family. The principal men of the nation, and great numbers of the common people, were settled on the river Chebar, which flows into the Euphrates about 300 miles to the north of Babylon. A few of these captives were advanced to the highest dignities in the courts of

[1] Neh. viii. 17.

Nebuchadnezzar and his successors, and doubtless exerted considerable influence in improving the condition of their less fortunate brethren. The poorer classes, forming the bulk of the population that survived the famine and the sword, remained in Judah, where Gedaliah, the son of Jeremiah's kind protector, was governor under the king of Babylon.

188. We shall first trace the fortunes of the captives in Chaldea. The Chebar is about 200 miles south of Ur the birthplace of Abraham, and is still less distant from Haran: Carchemish, where Nebuchadnezzar defeated Pharaoh, was situated at the confluence of this river with the Euphrates; Palmyra or Tadmor lay about 120 miles to the south-west of it; and Tiphsah (Thapsacus), the extreme northern point of Solomon's dominions, was about 100 miles further up the Euphrates. Although the river of Gozan, to whose banks the ten tribes were carried captive, is considerably to the east of the Chebar, the chosen people were thus once more united in a foreign land.[1] We shall see presently that another Joseph was raised up to protect and deliver the unhappy exiles. Two parties existed among them at the beginning of their captivity; one followed the false prophets who had caused the ruin of the nation, another was faithful to God. Psalm cxxxvii., "By the rivers of Babel, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion," expresses the feelings of the latter; the vindictive and unfaithful conduct of the former is seen in their correspondence with the princes of Judah, given in the book of Jeremiah.[2] For several years the captive Hebrews could not be persuaded that their exile would be of long continuance; the false prophets encouraged this idea, but Jeremiah told them "to build houses and plant vineyards," for it would last seventy years. Ezekiel prophesied among them, and was regarded with much respect by some of the elders.

189. Daniel and his companions were the only captives, besides Ezekiel, who stood prominently out in the history of this

[1] Hence probably Ezekiel speaks of *Israel*, not *Judah*; *elders of Israel*, and *princes of Israel*.

[2] Jer. xxix.

period. The book of Daniel, in which their misfortunes and advancement are related, does not contain a history of the Jews during the captivity in Babylon : it gives only an account of the means employed by God to mitigate the hardships of their condition, and at last work out their deliverance. Jeremiah and Ezekiel relate what took place among their enslaved and captive countrymen in Judah and Baylon ; Daniel confines himself to the doings and purposes of the Chaldean court. The life of Daniel, in its general outline, presents a remarkable parallel to that of Joseph. Both were carried captive in early youth to a foreign land, before the rest of their countrymen settled there. Jehovah raised them up to protect and deliver their nation, and advanced them to the highest offices among strangers. Both owed their elevation to the interpretation of a dream, and it is singular that Daniel, as well as Joseph, exercised this much-coveted gift, long before the event which first brought him into general notice. In short, Daniel rendered the same services to his countrymen towards the close of the national history that Joseph did at its commencement.

190. Daniel belonged to the royal family of Judah, and was taken to Babylon about twenty years before the sack of Jerusalem, and the burning of the temple by the Chaldeans. Nebuchadnezzar was then king of Babylon along with his father Nabopolassar, whose advanced age and feeble health rendered him unable to lead its armies. The beginning of Nebuchadnezzar's reign may thus date from the time when he began to reign along with his father, or when he began to reign alone. In Dan. i. 1, he appears as reigning along with his father ; in ii. 1, the "second year" dates from his father's death. There is thus no difficulty in explaining how Daniel could have been taken prisoner by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, have spent *three* years in studying the Chaldean language and learning, been honoured with an audience of the king for the first time at the end of that period, and yet advanced to the highest office of the state in the *second* year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. A number of other captives, probably from different countries, re-

ceived the same education as Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego; but these four excelled them all in knowledge and appearance.—(Dan. i.)

191. The event which brought Daniel into notice is fully narrated in Dan. ii.; he recalled to the king's memory and interpreted a forgotten dream. Nebuchadnezzar had seen a large figure with a head of gold representing himself, a breast of silver denoting the Medo-Persian kingdom, thighs of brass or the Grecian power, and legs of iron or the Roman empire.[1] A stone cut out of a mountain, without the help of man, and representing the kingdom of heaven, struck down the figure, and grew until it filled the whole earth. Each of the four kingdoms destroyed its predecessor, but the image remained entire notwithstanding: it represented the world; the stone, the Church. The real opposition, therefore, was between the stone and the image,—not between the head and breast, or the thighs and legs of the figure. Persia destroyed Babylon; Greece, Persia; and Rome, Greece; but these successive overthrows of empires were not represented by three successive removals of corresponding parts of the image. The worldly spirit was the same in all these monarchies, and the kingdom overthrown was incorporated with its successor. Hence the image continued entire, until destroyed by the kingdom of Christ. Another remarkable circumstance is, that the Persian power is called *inferior* to that of Nebuchadnezzar. Perhaps the empire of Persia was more extensive than that of Babylon, though traditions exist to the contrary; but its soldiers were inferior in courage, and its statesmen in prudence to those of Nebuchadnezzar.[2] Daniel was highly honoured for his skill in interpreting the dream; (1.) The king

[1] The following story from Herodotus also shows the importance attached to the dreams of eastern princes: "When Xerxes was thus eager to invade Greece, he had a vision one night which the Magi interpreted to mean that he would subdue the whole world. It was this: Xerxes thought himself crowned with an olive wreath, from which branches shot out till they covered all the earth, and then the crown on his head disappeared. The effect of the Magi's interpretation upon the assembled nobles was that each immediately repaired to his government, eager to raise his division of the army destined for this glorious undertaking." (vii. 19.)

[2] Nebuchadnezzar, but not his successors. Jer. xlix. 30, 34; Ezek xxxii. 11, 24.

worshipped him, and ordered an oblation to be offered in his honour; and (2.) He made him chief of the magicians and governor of the province of Babylon, if not prime minister of the empire. Some are surprised that Daniel does not say he refused the worship, the incense, and the oblation; and others suppose that they were ordinary marks of respect at court. However they may have been regarded by a Chaldean, they were idolatrous worship in the eyes of Daniel and his countrymen.[1] It is not said that Daniel declined these honours, because his character for piety was too well known to allow the supposition that he would accept them. Every intelligent reader of his life feels at once that he would point out the error to the king; it is not said that he did, because he supposes his readers possessed of piety and good sense themselves.—(Dan. ii.)

192. The first use which Daniel made of his influence with the king, was to procure the advancement of his three friends to high offices in the State. The envy and hatred of Nebuchadnezzar's captains were stirred up in consequence: all their services were forgotten; and four Jewish slaves were raised to higher positions in the kingdom. Daniel was too firmly seated in the royal favour to be immediately attacked; but his three friends were men of inferior standing, and a plot was formed to ruin them. The king was manifestly proud of being represented by gold in the image of his dream: it was the most precious of all metals; and the courtiers would soon perceive that allusions to it were not unacceptable to the monarch. When, therefore, they proposed to erect a golden image, representing probably Nebuchadnezzar himself or his empire, and that all persons in authority should worship it, the vanity of the tyrant eagerly caught at the idea. The three Hebrews absented themselves from the ceremonial: the Chaldean officers informed against them, and they were committed to the flames. The conspirators were proud of their success, and probably began to plot the ruin of Daniel: but Jehovah delivered his faithful witnesses; and a striking dis-

[1] Josephus says, "He saluted Daniel in the manner that men worship God, and gave command that he should be sacrified to as a god."—*Antiq.* x. 10.

play of the Divine power and presence taught the tyrant the folly and wickedness of his conduct.[1]—(Dan. iii.)

193. The next event recorded by Daniel took place towards the close of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. God punished the pride and cruelty of that monarch by driving him, in a state of insanity, from his throne to herd with the beasts of the field. Seven years elapsed before he recovered, when he issued a decree, recounting the cause of his madness, the warning he had received from Daniel, and his submission to the will of Heaven. The decree consists of three parts: (1.) The preamble, and the king's account of his alarming dream (Dan. iv. 1-19); (2.) Daniel's narrative containing the interpretation and fulfilment of the dream (20-33); and (3.) the king's thankfulness to God for the recovery of his reason (34-37). In the second chapter of the book of Daniel, where the first dream is recorded, every reader will be struck with the courtliness of Daniel's language. He is evidently a man accustomed to king's palaces, and can frame his language to suit royal ears. In this decree, however, his faithfulness in rebuking sin is not less conspicuous than his courtly bearing—"Break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor."—(Dan. iv.)

194. The iniquities of which Nebuchadnezzar was guilty were probably connected with the vast public works, on which he employed thousands of his miserable prisoners and subjects. Babylon was founded many ages before his birth; but the walls, temples, palaces, streets and embankments, with which he strengthened and enlarged it, justified him in asking, as if he had laid the foundations of the city, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built?" Ancient historians relate that when this empire was at its greatest splendour, the brick walls were 87 feet thick, and 350 feet high, and formed a square of fifteen miles to the side. A deep and broad ditch in front, filled with water from the Euphrates, rendered it impossible to batter the

[1] The exaltation of the four Hebrews, and the setting up of the golden image, are separated by an interval of sixteen years in the Septuagint version. Probably not as many months elapsed.

walls, or apply scaling ladders; and a hundred massive gates of brass[1] defended the approaches to the city. Spacious streets, connecting opposite gates, and intersecting each other at right angles, divided the area within the walls into 676 squares; but the whole of it was not covered with houses. Many squares were laid out in gardens and fields, which were found of service when Babylon was besieged. The Euphrates ran through the city from north to south, and was ultimately spanned by a bridge nearly 700 feet long, and 30 broad. The new palace stood at the western end of this bridge, in the part of the city added by Nebuchadnezzar; the old palace and the famous temple of Belus were at its eastern end. The engineering operations of Nebuchadnezzar even surpassed these splendid military and architectural works. To preserve the banks of the river within the town against the floods of summer, he raised brick walls of enormous thickness to a great height from the bed of the stream, and constructed stairs at short distances, which led down to the water, and furnished landing-places for ferry-boats between the opposite sides. Strong gates at the head of each staircase prevented access from the river to the city, except at the pleasure of the guard: they were usually open by day, but always shut at night. While these embankments were building, the course of the stream was changed. An immense lake, perhaps forty miles square, and of great depth, was dug in the country to the west of Babylon, and received for a time the waters of the Euphrates.[2] Nebuchadnezzar also endeavoured to prevent the inundations which annually devastated the neighbourhood of Babylon. For that purpose two canals, connecting the Euphrates with the Tigris, were dug about sixty miles to the north of the city: one of them could be navigated by vessels of considerable burden, and was therefore called the *King's river*. The lake already mentioned was also ultimately used for this purpose. Besides these works, Nebuchadnezzar enlarged the temple of Belus, and built the hanging gardens for which Babylon was celebrated in

[1] Isa. xlv. 2.

[2] Probably only part of them: the bed of the river did not require to be quite dry.

ancient times. These were terraces of great height and strength, on which the tallest trees, and all kinds of shrubs and flowers were planted, to console his Median queen for the want of hill-scenery in her adopted land. Much unrighteousness and cruelty must have been exercised in the construction of these numerous works;[1] for thousands of unfortunate persons have always fallen victims to the military and engineering operations of eastern despots. According to the account of Habakkuk, Nebuchadnezzar "set his nest on high, by cutting off many people." The same prophet declared that he "built a town with blood, and stablished a city by iniquity." Such were his oppressions and violence, that "the stone should cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber should answer it."

195. The overthrow of the Babylonian monarchy is the next event related by Daniel. Belshazzar, a descendant of Nebuchadnezzar, for *father* often means *ancestor* in Scripture, was then on the throne. This weak and dissolute prince, instead of opposing the advance of a Medo-Persian army under Cyrus, shut himself up in Babylon, where impregnable walls and provisions for many years bade defiance to the enemy. His subjects were slaves to luxury and drunkenness, especially during religious festivals; but so secure did they deem the city, that the presence of a hostile army before its walls produced no change on their careless revelry at these seasons. Belshazzar, surrounded by his wives and nobles, and drinking wine out of the golden vessels brought from Solomon's temple, was celebrating one of these feasts, when the hand appeared writing on the wall. None could read the words. The news spread through the extensive palace, and the queen-dowager,[2] whose prudence had made her second ruler in the kingdom, advised that Daniel should be summoned. Many years had elapsed since Nebuchadnezzar's death, and it is not likely that his godless successors would pay much respect to the Hebrew captive. He was engaged in business of state, but

[1] Especially if Josephus's account of the marvellous rapidity with which they were erected, be correct.

[2] "The king's grandmother."—Josephus. Bel-hazzar's wife was present at the feast: Dan. v. 10, 23.

in an inferior position, and at a distance from court.[1] Perhaps, also, terror had made the drunken revellers forget the faint knowledge they had of Daniel in their sober moments. He read the writing, however, and was made third ruler[2] in the empire; but the city was taken that night.—(Dan. v.)

196. Ancient historians relate that the kingdom of Babylon which Cyrus overthrew, was founded by Nabopolassar, or Nebuchadnezzar I., in 625 B.C. He revolted from the Assyrian empire, and at last destroyed its famous capital, Nineveh. His son, Nebuchadnezzar II., reigned alone from 606 B.C., and was one of the greatest and most cruel conquerors of ancient times. Palestine submitted to his arms; Tadmor was sacked by his army; Tyre was taken after a siege of thirteen years (586-574); Pharaoh was driven out of Asia; Egypt was afterwards subdued;[3] and his armies, it is said, penetrated through Africa to Spain. Ancient writers mention a peculiar disease from which he suffered towards the end of his reign, probably the madness that afflicted him. It appears from Scripture that he reigned forty-four years,—a singular coincidence with the testimony of profane authors.[4] Evil-Merodach succeeded him, and died after an inglorious reign of two years. Scripture mentions only another king of Babylon, though there were more.[5] Belshazzar, or Nabonned, for it was common with these kings to have two names, reigned seventeen years, and was killed in the sack of the city by the Medo-Persian army, which had invaded the country and laid siege to the capital.[6] Cyrus, who commanded the invaders,

[1] "Shushan the palace, in the province of Elam." Elam was added to the empire by Nebuchadnezzar, in fulfilment of prophecy; Jer. xlix. 34; Ezek. xxxii. 24.

[2] Not "a noble of the third rank," as some translate the words. The queen-dowager stood next the king, Daniel next her. Josephus says Daniel's reward was "a third part of the kingdom," but he misunderstood the passage.

[3] Ezek. xxix. 18, 19; xxvi. 1, comp. with xxix. 17.

[4] This period is got by comparing two different passages—2 Kings xxv. 27, and xxiv. 12.

[5] Jeremiah (xxvii. 7) says: "All nations shall serve him (Nebuchadnezzar), and his son, and his son's son," when the kingdom should be destroyed. But these words may refer to more than three generations.

[6] Bel and Nebo (Isa. xlvi. 1) were the names of two Babylonian gods. The former was, perhaps, the planet Jupiter or Saturn; the latter Mercury. Many Chaldean names were compounds of one or other of these words.

turned the waters of the Euphrates into the lake dug by Nebuchadnezzar, and entered the city by the then fordable river on the night of a great festival. His soldiers found the stairs leading from the bed of the stream unguarded, and the gates open. The palace was seized, Belshazzar slain fighting for his life, and the whole city was soon in possession of Cyrus. Babylonian writers give a different account of the fate of Belshazzar, but their story is not credible; and it is well known that ancient historians have not scrupled at times to set down deliberate falsehoods, when the honour of their country was at stake.

197. It still remains to give some account of the Jews who continued to dwell in Palestine after the destruction of Jerusalem. Gedaliah, the governor appointed by Nebuchadnezzar, fixed his residence at Mizpeh; and in a short time a considerable body of his countrymen gathered round him. Many of Zedekiah's officers had escaped to the mountains and deserts, where they were beyond the reach of the Chaldeans; but, as soon as the invaders retired, they came out of their hiding-places, and strengthened the government of Gedaliah. The Jews, also, who had fled to Moab, Ammon, and Edom, when the war broke out, now returned to the cities and villages of Judah. Jeremiah, probably through the intercession of Daniel, was allowed to join his countrymen at Mizpeh, and his writings contain an outline of their history. One of the captains, named Ishmael, was suspected of treachery by the others; but the governor did not share their suspicions. Seizing a favourable opportunity, Ishmael killed Gedaliah, with the Chaldeans of his suite; and also cruelly murdered seventy men, who came from Samaria with presents for the governor and the priests.[1] The other captains pursued Ishmael, but he escaped to the king of Ammon. They then retired, with the principal persons that were left, to the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, intending to enter Egypt. As the Chaldeans in attendance upon Gedaliah had been murdered along with him, they feared that their explanation of the affair would not be believed, and prepared to leave the country. Jeremiah

[1] "To the house of the Lord," was a phrase meaning, *to the priests*.

in vain dissuaded them. They removed to Tahpanhes and Noph in the Delta, and perversely worshipped "the queen of heaven" as the giver of good fortune, notwithstanding all the miseries their heathenism had caused. Most of them perished when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Egypt some years after; but, agreeably to the prediction uttered by Jeremiah, a few survived and returned to their native land.

198. Many Hebrews were left in Judah after this emigration, but the only notice of their history given in Scripture is very brief. About two years after the destruction of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Tyre, B.C. 586; and in 584 B.C., one of his captains carried away 745 Jews from their own country to Babylon. Perhaps this was the vengeance taken by the king for the murder of his lieutenant, Gedaliah; but there may have been another reason for this deportation. Tyre, which he was then besieging, drew its supplies of cattle and grain from Judea and the neighbouring countries. As its citizens had the command of the sea, a blockade by land might prove inconvenient, but could never cause a famine among them. Judea, therefore, may have been ravaged, and part of its inhabitants carried away, because they had supplied the besieged with provisions, or harboured their agents.

CHAPTER X.

JUDEA UNDER THE PERSIANS.

199. THE history of the Jews during this period is sometimes rendered obscure by the difficulty of determining the chronology. The Greek names of the Persian kings are not always the same as the Hebrew; and, in several cases, the same prince had different names. For the sake of clearness, a table is subjoined of the Persian kings, to the end of Nehemiah's administration, with the passages of Scripture in which they are mentioned.

Cyrus .	reigned from 536 B C.	7 years.	Isa. xlv. 1 ; Ezra i.
Cambyses	„ 529 „	7 „	Ahasuerus, Ezra iv. 6.
Smerdis	„ 522 „	7 months.	Artaxerxes, Ezra iv. 7.
Darius Hystaspis	„ 521 „	36 years.	Darius, Ezra iv. 5.
Xerxes I.	„ 485 „	21 „	Perhaps the Ahasuerus of Esther.
Artaxerxes Longimanus	„ 464 „	40 „	Artaxerxes, Ezra vii. 1 ; Neh. ii. 1.
Xerxes II.	„ 424 „	2 months.	
Sogdianus	„ 424 „	7 „	
Darius Nothus	„ 423 „	19 years.	Referred to, but not by name, in Neh. xiii. 6.

ZERUBBABEL, 536 B.C.

200. Scripture has not related how Cyrus, king of Persia, was prevailed on to permit the return of the Jews to their own land, and the rebuilding of their temple. It is likely from the nature of the case, and from tradition, that Daniel was the means of obtaining these favours. Although highly esteemed by Nebuchadnezzar and Darius the Mede, he neither saved Jerusalem from the cruelty of the former, nor persuaded the latter to have it rebuilt.[1] If tradition be true, he showed Cyrus the prophecies of Isaiah, where that king was mentioned by name 150 years before his birth, as the restorer and builder of Jerusalem, and thus persuaded him, immediately on his accession, to issue an edict allowing the rebuilding of the temple.[2] As many Israelites as pleased were at the same time permitted to return to Judah ; and their neighbours in Babylon were exhorted to assist them with money and cattle for the temple service. It was another going forth from Egypt. Zerubbabel, the great-grandson of Coniah, was appointed Tirshatha or governor of the country ; and Joshua the high priest accompanied the expedition. About 50,000 persons *altogether* availed themselves of the permission of Cyrus, of whom nearly 30,000 belonged to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Of the remaining 20,000, upwards of 7000 were servants; and it is disputed whether the 13,000 not accounted for were descendants of the ten tribes, or men of impure blood. Besides this large caravan,

[1] In the first year of Darius, Daniel found that the 70 years of Jeremiah were nearly at an end. He prayed to God for the rebuilding of the temple; it is not likely that he would forget to petition the king.

[2] Isa. xliv. 28.

smaller bodies of Hebrew exiles would return from time to time; for the Jews were then scattered over the Persian empire, and many might be unable or unwilling at first to leave their adopted land. Cyrus presented the exiles with the gold and silver vessels of which Nebuchadnezzar spoiled the temple, and allowed them as much cedar-wood from Lebanon as they required. So few beasts of burden accompanied the caravan, only one to every six persons, that the exiles must have converted their property into money for convenience of transport. On this supposition, it is easy to understand how a few of the principal men were able to dedicate upwards of £100,000 in money alone to the temple service.[1]—(Ezra i. ii.)

201. A greater number of Hebrews was perhaps left in Babylon than returned to Palestine. Jewish writers at least ceased to regard Jerusalem or Judah as the only holy land on earth. "Whosoever dwells in Babylon," they say, "is as though he dwelt in the land of Israel;" and again, "All foreign land is called heathen, except Babylon." Syria was thought entitled to the same honourable regards as Palestine; it was bound to tithes, and to the seventh year; and a farm in that country was as highly esteemed by a Jew as one in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. Some Rabbins make even stronger statements. Most of the Hebrews who left Babylon with Ezra, in their opinion, were of impure blood: "all lands are as a mixed lump, compared with the land of Israel; and the land of Israel is a mixed lump, compared with Babylon."[2]

202. The Jews had scarcely settled in Palestine when they were exposed to insults and ravages from the neighbouring nations. Petty wars were carried on between the governors of provinces in the Persian empire in defiance of the royal authority; much more easily could they wage war with the despised Jews, or inflict on them injury and annoyance. Even Nehemiah himself, though the king's cup-bearer, and armed with letters of recommendation to the governors west of the Euphrates, barely

[1] 61,000 drams or darics (the daric being a Persian gold coin, with the figure of a kneeling archer on it, valued at 13s 6d., though some make it more), and 5000 pounds of silver, of 100 shekels to the pound.

[2] See Lightfoot, *Horae Heb.* i. Cor.

succeeded in delivering his countrymen from the attacks with which they were threatened. The royal authority in Persia was often despised, unless it were the interest of the governors to obey, or the king himself were present with an army to enforce his will. The Jews had therefore good cause to be afraid, and required to proceed with caution and firmness. The altar of burnt-offering was first set up on its ancient site; probably, indeed, on its former foundations; Tyrian workmen were hired to bring cedar-wood from Lebanon to Joppa, and masons prepared stones for building the temple. Nearly two years were spent in collecting materials, but at length the foundation was solemnly laid. Many who remembered the former temple, wept aloud when they compared their own poverty and the bare area of the hill-top, with the magnificent structure that crowned it in their younger days. In reality, the size of the new temple, according to the decree of Cyrus, was greater than that of Solomon;[1] but the four walls of a building just rising above ground appear mean and insignificant compared with the building when finished. The work, however, was not allowed to proceed. The descendants of the colonists, whom the Assyrians had planted in Samaria, claimed a right to engage in it along with the Jews, on the plea that they also worshipped Jehovah. Enraged at the repulse which they received, they bribed some of the councillors of Cyrus to persuade him, that the building of the temple was adverse to the king's interests. In the reign of his son Cambyses, who passed through Palestine on his way to and from Egypt, they practised the same arts apparently with success. From the usurper, Smerdis, they succeeded in obtaining a decree forbidding the building altogether. Little progress was therefore made during the first fourteen years after the return from captivity, either in fortifying the city,[2] or building the temple.—(Ezra iii., iv.)

203. The accession of Darius, however, was favourable to the Hebrews. Haggai and Zechariah encouraged them to proceed with the work: perhaps it was never wholly stopped, except

[1] Ezra vi. 3.

[2] The walls were considerably advanced: Ezra iv. 12; v. 3.

during the few months of Smerdis' reign; and the decree of that usurper would not be respected by the new king. The Samaritans do not appear to have offered direct opposition; but they urged the Persian governors to investigate the matter. Zerubbabel and his associates appealed to the decree of Cyrus; and the governors requested the king to ascertain whether that decree was really made. Darius had married the daughter of Cyrus, and respected him so highly, that he adopted his policy and observed his laws in the minutest matters relating to the government of the empire. Search was accordingly made in the house of rolls at Achmetha (Ecbatana, Hamadan);[1] and, when this decree was found, Darius confirmed it, and required the governors, on pain of death, to give Zerubbabel every assistance in their power. Prayer for the king and his sons was expected from the Jews in return for these favours. The temple was thus finished in the sixth year of Darius, or nineteen years after the return from Babylon. The passover, after the dedication, was held with unusual solemnity, not only by those who came back from exile, but also by many who were born in the land, or had never left it. The walls of Jerusalem were, perhaps, finished during this season of prosperity.—(Ezra v., vi.)

EZRA, 457 B.C.

204. Fifty-eight years after the rebuilding of the temple, a second caravan of Hebrew exiles, under the direction of Ezra, crossed the desert from Babylon to Jerusalem. Ezra was a member of the priestly order, and is called a skilful scribe in the law of Moses, the first time the expression is found in Scripture. Artaxerxes, who was then king, permitted those Hebrews who pleased to return to the land of their fathers, and empowered Ezra to regulate the affairs of the Jews, according to their ancient laws. The king, his counsellors, and many of the people, contributed large sums of money for the purchase of sacrifices; and, as a special mark of the royal favour, members of the tribe of Levi and their servants were exempted from taxes of all kinds. Ezra was also empowered to

[1] The governors expected that the decree would be found in Babylon, so that there must have been two places in which the archives of the empire were kept.

appoint judges in Judah, and to enforce their authority among the Hebrews west of the Euphrates by death, banishment, confiscation of goods, and imprisonment. Other princes after Artaxerxes were very favourably disposed towards the Jews; but these privileges were certainly extraordinary. Whatever may have been the means employed to obtain the edict from the king, it is evident that we have in it a proof of God's watchful care over his chosen people.—(Ezra vii.)

205. About 6000 persons altogether accompanied Ezra from Babylon. Many were still unwilling to leave their adopted country, and it was with difficulty that Ezra persuaded a few of the Levites to join the expedition. After a journey of four months they reached Jerusalem; and the money and vessels which they brought with them were useful in beautifying and repairing the temple. Ezra was soon informed that corruption had crept into the nation: the sins which caused the ruin of their ancestors had been again committed—intermarriages with the heathen, and doing after their abominations. It appears that this backsliding had only recently taken place; for these practices were not yet deeply rooted. Some of the Jews, it is said, had children by their heathen wives; and, as they were exceptions, it is probable that the custom of marrying heathen women had been introduced only a few years before. But it had become very prevalent; for many of the priests and Levites were guilty; and the elders of the people were "chief in the trespass." Ezra was amazed at this deplorable infatuation; national weakness would be the inevitable result if the practice were allowed to go on unchecked: the people would be consumed "so that there would be no remnant nor escaping." Three months were spent in investigating the matter; and at length the offenders solemnly promised to dismiss the strange women whom they had married. This promise seems to have been kept, for the sin is not mentioned during the first administration of Nehemiah, thirteen years after. Ezra continued in Jerusalem during that period; but the book which bears his name closes with an account of this transaction.—(Ezra viii.-x.)

NEHEMIAH, 444-432 B.C.

206. Although Ezra was enabled to reform the nation on his arrival at Jerusalem, he did not save the city from the ravages to which the whole country was soon after exposed (448 B.C.) The Persian general, Megabyzus, who commanded the army which subdued the revolted Egyptians, rebelled against Artaxerxes, and made Syria the seat of war. Several battles were fought before he laid down his arms, and was again received into favour; and many acts of injustice must have been committed in Palestine, of which profane history has preserved no record. Among these we may place the breaking down of the walls of Jerusalem, and the burning of the gates. Nehemiah, the cup-bearer of the king, and a man of rank and influence, was informed of the miserable and defenceless condition of his countrymen, by Jews who had arrived at Shushan from Jerusalem. He spent three months in fasting for his own and his people's sins, in prayer for guidance, and in mourning over the national misfortunes, before an opportunity occurred of representing the matter to the king. There were always several cup-bearers in the Persian court, who relieved each other from time to time in attendance upon the monarch. At length Nehemiah's period of service came round, and on the first day that he appeared before Artaxerxes, he received permission to visit Jerusalem, with power to reform abuses, and to obtain from the governors in the neighbourhood any assistance he required in fortifying the city. Without delay he left Shushan, where he was then residing. An escort of Persian cavalry conveyed him safely across the desert; but they did not remain in Jerusalem, otherwise the Samaritans would not have dared to threaten the Jews with hostilities.—(Neh. i. 1–ii. 11.)

207. A few days after his arrival, Nehemiah proposed to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, and showed the king's letters to the principal men. Their defenceless condition, and the reproaches heaped on them by the neighbouring nations, weighed heavy on their minds, and they at once agreed to the governor's proposal. But all were not equally earnest in the work, and some even refused to take part in it. The heathen in the neighbourhood

looked with a jealous eye upon the progress of these fortifications; and Sanballat, a Moabite, who was governor of Samaria, assembled an army to stop them. Nehemiah encouraged the people, and adopted effectual measures for repulsing an attack upon the city. Sanballat also hired citizens of Jerusalem to betray the plans of the governor, and to recommend to him imprudent steps; but the caution of Nehemiah baffled the cunning of the Samaritan. Tobiah, the lieutenant of Sanballat, was related by marriage to several of the principal families in Jerusalem, and by "his good deeds," although the words are used in irony by Nehemiah, had formed a strong party among the unworthy nobles. Men and women, who pretended to the gift of prophecy, and were in the pay of Tobiah, attempted to terrify the governor by their predictions, but in vain. The fortifications rapidly progressed, and were completed, to the great dismay of the enemy, in fifty-two days.—(Neh. ii. 12-iv. 23; vi.)

208. The nobles of Jerusalem seem to have been actuated, at this time, by the utmost selfishness; and Nehemiah might have been unable to effect any improvement on the state of the nation, if the common people had not favoured his views. While pious Jews in all countries were redeeming their brethren who had been sold into slavery among the heathen, the sordid nobles of Judah were seizing the lands of the poorer classes, and selling their children for slaves. Instead of lending money on the security of farms or goods, they exacted interest from the poor, contrary to the law. The price of corn was high: the king's tribute required to be paid: and the common people, unable to meet these demands, and the interest of the money lent besides, lost their lands, and were forced to sell their daughters for slaves. The loud complaints made to Nehemiah against these unrighteous acts, induced him to insist on the debts being cancelled, and the lands restored at once, with the hundredth part of the money or goods originally lent. The nobles, ashamed of their conduct, or overawed by his firmness, agreed on oath to his demands. Nehemiah himself set a bright example of

singleness of purpose and rectitude of action, by not exacting from the people the taxes to which he was entitled as governor. —(Neh. v.)

209. Enemies without and traitors within still rendered Nehemiah's position one of great difficulty. The citizens of Jerusalem required to guard the walls day and night, and a trusty man was appointed governor. Much ignorance prevailed regarding the precepts of the law, and steps were taken to instruct the people. Excepting part of the prophecies of Daniel, and a line or two in Jeremiah, all the sacred books which they then possessed were written in Hebrew; they themselves spoke Chaldee, and only a few of the learned class knew the ancient tongue of the nation. Ezra, assisted by a number of priests and Levites, read and explained the law in Chaldee to the people, three hours a day being spent in that exercise, and other three in confessing their own and their fathers' sins. This continued for three weeks, and a great change in outward respect for the law of God was the result: a covenant was then entered into by the nation, to separate entirely from the neighbouring heathen, to observe the Sabbath-day and the seventh year of rest, and to keep all the other precepts of the law.—(Neh. viii. 9–x.)

210. The small population of Jerusalem, compared with the extensive fortifications which had to be defended, caused Nehemiah much anxiety. The rulers of the people and the descendants of its ancient inhabitants lived in the holy city, but their numbers were not sufficient. Others volunteered to leave their ancestral villages or towns and dwell there, and a law was also passed that every tenth man of the people should do the same: the population of Jerusalem may then have amounted to several thousands; but Hecataeus, a Greek historian, says that the population of Jerusalem about 100 years after this time was 120,000.[1] When these provisions had been made for defence, and the temple service again reformed, the wall was solemnly dedicated, and the blessing of Jehovah invoked for the welfare of the nation.—(Neh. xi., xii.)

[1] Josephus, *C. Apion*, i. 22.

NEHEMIAH, 408 B.C.

211. All these transactions happened in the first year of Nehemiah's administration; but no account has been preserved of what took place during the other eleven years that he continued in Jerusalem. He returned to Babylon in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, and is supposed to have again visited Jerusalem after an absence of twenty-four years. Darius Nothus was then king of Persia; and the last chapter of the book of Nehemiah gives some particulars of that visit. During his absence the people had broken the covenant so solemnly made a few years before; heathens had been introduced into the congregation, intermarriages with them were not uncommon, the Sabbath was not kept, and the temple was forsaken by the Levites. Eliashib, the high priest, led the way in these transgressions; his grandson, Manasseh, was married to the daughter of Sanballat; and he himself was on such intimate terms with Tobiah[1] that he had prepared a chamber for him in the temple. Perhaps he died before Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem, for his son Joiada was then high priest. The Jews say that Ezra lived to the great age of 120, and he may have been a witness of this backsliding in faith; but his influence for good was limited to mere example. Malachi also preached against the sinful conduct of his countrymen in withholding tithes and marrying foreign women; but those in authority were not moved by his warnings or entreaties. Nehemiah soon put a stop to these unlawful proceedings. The temple was cleansed from the pollutions of the heathen, who had frequented it; and the tithes were again paid to the Levites, who were thus enabled to resume their duties. Men of Tyre, and even Jews themselves, were in the habit of bringing goods for sale into Jerusalem on the Sabbath; but the governor kept the gates shut all day, and threatened the merchants who applied for admission with summary punishment, if they did not withdraw. A number of the people had married women of Ashdod, Moab, and Ammon: Nehemiah punished some, disgraced others, and made them

[1] "Allied unto Tobiah" (xiii. 4), in the original, denotes *relationship* or *intimacy:* here probably the latter.

swear that this unlawful practice should cease. Manasseh, however, refused to part with his wife, and was driven from the city: he fled to Shechem, and his reception there demands a brief notice.—(Neh. xiii.)

212. The Samaritan relatives of Manasseh undertook to provide him with a temple and a priesthood, in return for the honours he forfeited by refusing to put away his wife. Darius Nothus, for reasons which are not known, allowed them to build a temple on Mount Gerizim, where they pretended that Joshua erected the altar on which were inscribed the words of the law,[1] and where they also imagined that Jehovah should be specially worshipped. Manasseh was made high priest; and his descendants held the office till the temple was destroyed. These proceedings greatly exasperated the Jews: a heathen people, led on by a member of Aaron's family, pretended to be the true people of God; and a temple, which Scripture did not recognise, was spoken of as the only place from which acceptable worship could ascend to heaven. Every fugitive from the discipline of the Jewish Church was gladly welcomed by the Samaritans; and at last the number of these Jews became so considerable, that they were able to abolish the worship of heathen gods in their adopted country. When special privileges were bestowed on the Jews by Grecian princes, the Samaritans claimed kindred with them, and demanded the same favours; but when adversity befell the former, the latter denied all relationship. Antiochus Epiphanes polluted the temple at Jerusalem in 167 B.C., and dedicated it to the worship of Jupiter; the Samaritans then pretended that their temple was *nameless*, or dedicated to no god in particular, and offered to make it the temple of Jupiter Hellenius. These things tended to inflame the hatred of the Jews against the Samaritans; nor was it appeased, even when the temple on Mount Gerizim was demolished, and the family of Manasseh nearly extirpated by Hyrcanus, the Jewish high priest, in 129 B.C. The Samaritans received no part of the Hebrew Scriptures except the Pentateuch,

[1] Deut. xxvii. 1-6. This altar was built on Mount Ebal, so that it must have disappeared long before this time.

which they held in the highest honour; and a small synagogue, which meets in Shechem to this day, pretends to possess a copy of it, written by Abishua, the great-grandson of Aaron. When hard pressed on the point, the elders confess that his subscription, giving his name and genealogy, was torn out by some evil-disposed person.[1]

213. The inspired history contained in the Old Testament closes with the second administration of Nehemiah; but the list of high priests is continued to the time of Alexander the Great, and the overthrow of the Persian monarchy.[2] It is as follows:— (1.) Jeshua, who came from Babylon 536 B.C.; (2.) Joiakim; (3.) Eliashib, who is known from profane history to have died 412 B.C. During this interval of 124 years, only three high priests are mentioned; but some names may have been omitted from the register, according to the usual custom of the Jews. Thus Zerubbabel is called the son of Salathiel, although in reality he was his *grandson*, and the son of Pedaiah. (4.) Joiada; (5.) Jonathan or Johanan; and, (6.) Jaddua. Nehemiah mentions these high priests because they were contemporaneous with himself; but an important event is connected with the last-named. Josephus relates that Jaddua, the high priest, when an old man, met Alexander the Great on his entrance into Jerusalem (332 B.C.), and saved the city from the fury of the conqueror. This took place eighty years after the death of Eliashib, and, perhaps, thirty or forty after the death of Nehemiah.

214. Before concluding our review of the historical books, it will be advisable to make some remarks on the book of Esther. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to determine when Esther flourished, and what was the name by which Ahasuerus, her royal consort, was known to the Greeks. As seven counsellors

[1] Travellers are not permitted to handle the book since the detection of this cheat.

[2] It is commonly supposed that the family register of Zerubbabel descends as far down; but that idea is founded on a mistaken view of the passage, 1 Chron. iii. 19-24. The decent given is Zerubbabel, Hananiah, Pelatiah (19-21): "the sons of Rephaiah, the sons of Arnan," etc, which are separated from Pelatiah by a colon in our version, should stand at the beginning of a new chapter. They formed part of the family of Judah, but not of David.

are assigned to the Persian monarch by the writer of the book, and this number dates from the reign of Darius Hystaspis, it is plain that the exaltation of Esther must have taken place after his accession in 521 B.C. But it is known from the Greek historians, that Esther could not have been the queen of Darius, which carries the date of her exaltation thirty-six years nearer our times, or to 485 B.C. at the earliest—that is, 114 years after the carrying of Coniah into captivity. Mordecai, the cousin of this celebrated queen, and perhaps the writer of the book, is said to have been taken prisoner to Babylon along with that king; but this cannot be understood literally, for we must suppose him in that case to have been at least 120 years of age, and his cousin, Esther, could not have been *young*. He was descended from a family that had been carried captive with Coniah; but, for brevity, is said to have been so himself. Xerxes, however, the son and successor of Darius, is not generally supposed to have been the Ahasuerus of Esther, for his queen Amestris was guilty of the most barbarous inhumanity. Josephus and many writers suppose that Artaxerxes Longimanus was the Persian monarch who married Esther. But there are several strong reasons for supposing that Esther was the queen of Xerxes. Herodotus, the Greek historian, relates that Xerxes, after having reduced the revolted Egyptians in the second year of his reign, made a great gathering of his nobles in the following year to celebrate this success, and consider the propriety of invading Greece; the feast mentioned in the book of Esther was also celebrated in the third year of the king's reign. Besides, Herodotus calls Hegias, an Ephesian, the principal eunuch of Xerxes; and Scripture names the person, who was over the women in the palace of Ahasuerus, Hegai. The cruelty of Amestris is not an insuperable objection to this supposition; for there is no evidence from Scripture to show that Esther was tender-hearted. On the contrary, she appears to have been of a revengeful and cruel nature.[1] Commentators suppose that, as

[1] The name Amestris seems to be a compound of *Am, people*, and ester (esther, satârah), *a star*. She may have been called "star of the people," in gratitude for the deliverance she

the laws of the Medes and Persians could not be changed, she only obtained from the king permission for her countrymen to stand on the defensive if attacked by their enemies. This is scarcely reconcilable with her request for a second day's slaughter in Shushan.

CHAPTER XI.

POETICAL AND PROPHETICAL BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

215. It appears from Scripture that the Word of God came to men in various ways. Jehovah walked in the garden, and talked with Adam in the cool of the day: he spoke to Moses face to face on the Mount, and by a voice from the cloud over the mercy-seat; but no other prophet was admitted to the same privilege. In one case the word of God was communicated in writing, when Moses received the two tables of stone. Job was addressed out of a whirlwind; Samuel heard one speaking to him; and Elijah received a message from heaven by the still small voice on Horeb. Usually, however, these communications came either by night or by day in the form of visions, in which there was something that clearly distinguished them from ordinary dreams. Actions were done, words were spoken, strange sights were seen, and even the lapse of time was noted by prophets thus under the influence of God. Elisha ran beside the chariot of Naaman; Ezekiel saw men slain in Jerusalem, idolaters at their worship, women weeping, and a man falling down dead; Daniel conversed with his heavenly guide on the future history of the world; John saw the dead standing at the judgment-seat, wonders in heaven above and on the earth beneath, and he also noted the lapse of what seemed half an hour in heaven. In ancient prophecy, men of God were said to *see*

effected. There is no reason for supposing that she received the name Esther from the Persian monarch.

visions; in New Testament times, they were said to be *in the spirit*. Isaiah was in the temple when the word of God came to him in vision; Ezekiel was sitting in his house with the elders of Israel before him; Peter was on the house-top praying, and John was in the island-prison of Patmos for the sake of the Gospel. Another way of communicating the Divine purposes to man, was that generally adopted after the ascension of Christ, by the direct action of the Spirit on the minds of his apostles and followers. What Christ had told his disciples was thus brought to their remembrance, and new truth was imparted without either vision or actual speech. Angels also were employed from the earliest times in making known the will of God to men; they appeared repeatedly to Abraham, and the New Testament contains nearly as many instances as the Old in which their agency was employed. The word of God, in whatever way communicated, carried with it evidence of its Divine origin. David resolved to keep the truth shut up within his own bosom, but he was compelled by an unseen power to declare it among men: "While I was musing, the fire burned."[1] Jeremiah, shrinking from strife and trembling for his safety, wished to conceal the messages he received from heaven, but they were as "burning fire in his bones."[2] Paul felt that "necessity was laid upon him"[3] to preach Christ; and the apostles "could not but speak the things which they had seen and heard."[4]

JOB.

216. The introduction to the book of Job gives an account of his wealth, family, and misfortunes.—(i. ii.) Three of his friends paid him a visit, on hearing of the sudden change which he had experienced, from overflowing riches and the highest respect to utter poverty and contempt. They had previously discussed his case, and their minds were made up what to say. A younger man, named Elihu, was present at the interview, but took no part in the conversation till the end. Job,

[1] Ps. xxxix. 3. [2] Jer. xx. 7-9. [3] 1 Cor. ix. 16. [4] Acts. iv. 20.

uncertain what meaning to put upon the silence of his friends, began by wishing that he had either never been born, or had died in infancy.—(iii.) Eliphaz let him know at once that he could not sympathize with these complaints; he laid down and illustrated the following points :—

(1.) In no instance have the innocent perished (iv. 7-16).
(2.) Man cannot be more just than God (iv. 17-21); and hence,
(3.) He will either be obdurate in sin and perish (v. 1-7), or,
(4.) Repent and be saved (v. 8-26).

Job does not reply to these points immediately, but contrasts—
(1.) His own weakness with the might of God (vi. 2-vii. 19); and
(2.) Confesses that he is a sinner requiring pardon (vii. 20, 21).

Bildad argues (1.) That Job accuses God of injustice (viii. 1-7); but
(2.) God never forsakes the upright (viii. 8-22).

Job answers (1.) No one is upright; and all suffer by the triumphing of wicked men (ix.); still,
(2.) He does not know for what sin God is afflicting him (x.)

Zophar bluntly calls these pleadings *boastful lies* (xi.)

Job, in reply, (1.) Charges his friends with ignorance of God's ways (xii. 1-xiii. 17); and
(2.) Allows the impossibility of man's justifying himself before God (xiii. 18-28; xiv.)

Eliphaz then (1.) Reproves Job's assumption of superior wisdom (xv. 1-9); and,
(2.) Asserts the certainty of the wicked being punished on earth (xv. 20-35).

Job declines to answer, and bewails his wretchedness (xvi., xvii.)

Bildad further taunts him, and describes the miseries of the wicked (xviii.)

Job allows that miseries, for which he can see no adequate cause (xvi. 17), have befallen him, but relies on a Redeemer in the end (xix.)

Zophar affirms that misery, not a Redeemer, is the lot of wicked men (xx.)

Job maintains, in reply, that prosperity is often their lot on earth (xxi.)

Eliphaz suggests some sins of which Job may have been guilty, and exhorts him to repent (xxii.)

Job maintains (1.) His own innocence (xxiii.), and
(2.) The temporal prosperity of the wicked (xxiv.); he also shows,
(3.) That God's ways are beyond the understanding of men (xxvi.);
(4.) That the hypocrite, as his friends supposed him to be, is unmasked by adversity (xxvii.); and
(5.) That wisdom in these things belongs to God only (xxviii.)

His friends make no reply to these positions; and Job, after contrasting

his past happiness with his present misery, concludes by asserting his integrity (xxix.-xxxi.)

When all were silent, Elihu began. He showed (1.) That Job was wrong in absolutely asserting his own innocence, but right in expecting a Redeemer; and (2.) That the censures of the three friends were too severe (xxxii.–xxxvii.)

Jehovah then spoke out of the whirlwind; and, by an enumeration of the most ordinary phenomena of nature, showed Job, that if he could not understand these things, much less could he understand the dealings of God with men (xxxviii.-xli.)

The repentance of Job, his restoration to God's favour, and his subsequent prosperity, are described in chapter xlii.

217. We know nothing with certainty concerning Job, except what is told us in the book that bears his name. He is mentioned by Ezekiel and James along with Noah and Daniel, and it is therefore inferred that he was a real person, not the hero of a parable or an allegory. Many conjectures have been made regarding the country of which he was a native, the family to which he belonged, the time when he lived, and the person by whom the book was written; but they are all surmises, equally difficult to defend or refute. It is probable that Job was a native of Idumea, and many suppose that he lived before or during the time of Moses. He dwelt in a land where kings ruled and cities were inhabited. Nobles and princes, merchants and travellers, warriors and pirates,[1] lords and slaves, are all mentioned. Mining shafts were sunk in the earth,[2] inscriptions were written on the rocks, and the splendid palaces or cities of kings had become ruins in his country.[3] Justice was duly administered; the servant could implead his master; adultery and sun-worship[4] were serious crimes; and the stocks was a common punishment. It was deemed wickedness, as in the law of Moses, to glean the vineyards; to take the clothing of the poor or fatherless in pledge, and to deprive the fields of their period of rest. Earthquakes appear to have been frequent, "overturning

[1] Job ix. 26, "Swift ships," or "hostile ships." [2] Job xxviii. 1-11.
[3] "Built" (what are now) "ruins for themselves," iii. 14; xx. 29.
[4] Comp. Ezek. viii. 17, "lifted the branch to the nose," with Job xxxi. 26, 27.

the mountains;"[1] snows swelled the streams, and severe frost closed them up; hurricanes swept leaves and stubble before them; eclipses had been observed;[2] and the changes of weather were anticipated on the heliacal setting of certain stars.[3] Polygamy appears to have been practised;[4] and the equality of men in the sight of God was recognised.[5] One God, known as Jehovah, was worshipped; the sinful condition of mankind was acknowledged,[6] and a Redeemer expected;[7] sacrifices were offered; the use of the number seven implies the existence of the Sabbath;[8] and visits were received by men from the world of spirits.

The peacock was not one of the animals known in Job's country, although it is mentioned in the English version (xxxix. 13). The verse should rather be rendered, "The wing of the ostrich exults in flight, but is her wing and feather also pious (like the stork's)?" and her impiety or want of affection is then described.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

218. Sacred poetry flourished among the Hebrews from an early period; the song with them was the handmaid of religion. Their earliest existing poem is the Song of Moses after the passage of the Red Sea, unless the book of Job be older. Stanzas of other two, written towards the end of the sojourn in the wilderness, are contained in Num. xxi. 17, 18, 27-30. The benediction of the priests, and the words of Moses on the removal and pitching of the camp, are also specimens of poetical composition. Perhaps *the book of the wars of the Lord*, or *the book of Jasher* as it was also called, may have been written in poetry. Early ages preferred poetical to prose composition for the transmission of heroic deeds to posterity, and there is no reason to doubt that the Hebrews resembled other nations in this respect. The song which Moses commanded all Israel to learn, and the songs of Deborah and Hannah, are the next that

[1] Job ix. 5; xiv. 18. [2] ix. 7. [3] ix. 9; xxxviii. 31, 32.
[4] xxvii. 15. [5] xxxi. 13-15. [6] iv. 19; ix. 30-32; xiv. 4.
[7] xix. 25-27; ix. 33; comp. xxxiii. 6, 7. [8] v. 19. [9] iv. 13-21.

occur in history, but they were not used in the worship of God. The great religious awakening that took place on the accession of David, produced a large number of sacred poems fitted for the temple service and the instruction of the people. Music had been introduced into the worship of God in the schools of the prophets during the judgeship of Samuel; and David, skilled in the art himself, and conscious of its power over the mind, employed it in the tabernacle. Suitable compositions for singing with the voice, or accompanying on the harp, did not exist at that time, but David soon supplied the want. He was inspired to write at least eighty psalms, which breathe the wants, the wishes, the fears and hopes of believers. Some of them were composed when he was an exile or an outlaw, others when he was a king: several contain his bitter regrets over shameful sins, and not a few his thankfulness for great deliverances. One[1] composed by David, "the servant of God," gives a humbling view of the ways of men compared with the ways of God; another[2] with the beautiful title, "The Dumb Dove among Strangers," was written when he was feigning madness in Gath. Many of them refer to his own trials and sorrows, under which those of the believer are represented; and several, for the chief of which the reader is referred to § 230, contain prophecies of the griefs and triumphs of his great descendant the Messiah. David was thus the real founder of the religious poetry of the Hebrews; and it is on this account that the Psalms, although not many more than half of them were composed by him, are usually called the Psalms of David. But all his poems were not equally fitted for the worship of God: the lament for Saul, (known as the *Song of the Bow*,) and the elegy on Abner, though inserted in the sacred narrative, are of this class, and it is probable that he wrote many others of a similar kind.

219. The Psalms may be classified under the following heads:—

(1.) *Psalms of Praise.*—In these songs the Psalmist adores the loving-kindness, the greatness, and the faithfulness of God.

[1] Ps. xxxvi. The same title is prefixed to Ps. xviii. Ps lvi.

His heart overflows with gratitude to the King of Israel; and he gives expression to his feelings in the language of joy and praise. In some cases these psalms are called *songs*; in others, they begin with the words, "Sing to the Lord."—Ps. cxlv. xcvi.

(2.) *Psalms of Prayer.*—When the Psalmist is in distress or danger, he gives utterance to a prayer for help in the form of a song. Sometimes he confesses sin and implores forgiveness or sanctification; sometimes enemies watch for his halting or seek his life; and in other cases he is debarred from the sanctuary of God. In these psalms he cries to God "out of the depths," or "from the miry clay;" he compares himself to "the hart panting after water-brooks," and to the weary traveller "in a dry and thirsty land." But psalms of prayer also embrace such as express the sadness felt by the believer, when he considers his own weakness and readiness to yield to temptation.—Ps. xc. cii. Other names than prayer-songs are applied to them, viz., "to bring to remembrance," putting God in mind of his promises as it were, Ps. xxxviii. lxx.; "destroy not," that is, "have mercy," Ps. lvii.

(3.) *Didactic Psalms*, such as those with the word *Maschil, to instruct*, prefixed. The Psalmist communicates moral or religious instruction in these songs. In Psalm xlix., for example, he explains that, though the wicked may enjoy temporal prosperity in this world, and the righteous be afflicted, a suitable return will be made to each "in the morning" of the resurrection. Psalms l. lxxiii., are also of this class. Sometimes the great events of the sojourn in Egypt, of the passage through the wilderness, or the conquest, are turned into song for the benefit of the people who had not direct access to the Scriptures.—Ps. cv.-cvii. In one case the Psalmist writes a sublime poem on the wonders and wisdom seen in God's works of creation.—Ps. civ. This is the most ancient treatise on natural theology, except several parts of the book of Job. In these didactic psalms, prayers and exhortations to praise God are sometimes mingled with direct teaching, but they are in general easily distinguished from psalms of prayer or praise.

220. Many of the Psalms have a superscription, indicating by whom they were written. It was usual to put such headings on sacred songs, as we find from various instances in Scripture;[1] and it may be assumed, that they were in general prefixed to the Psalms by the inspired writers themselves: at least the Septuagint, or Greek version of the Old Testament, made about 250 B.C., contains most of these headings; but they were so old, even in those days, that the translators could not turn several of them into Greek. The heading forms the first verse of the Psalm in the Hebrew Bible, though frequently omitted altogether in the English. Judging partly from these headings, partly from the contents, the Psalms may be ascribed to the following authors:—

Moses wrote Psalm . . .	xc.
David wrote Psalms . . .	i.-xli.; li.-lxxi.; ci. cii.; cviii.-cx.; cxxii.; cxxiv.; cxxxi.; cxxxiii.; cxxxviii.-cxlv.
Solomon wrote Psalms . . .	lxxii.; cxxvii.
Asaph, and members of his family, wrote Psalms . . .	l.; lxxiii.-lxxxiii.
The sons of Korah, of the course of Heman, wrote Psalms .	xlii.-xlix.; lxxxvi.-lxxxix.

The remaining forty-four Psalms were mostly composed during or after the captivity; but the writers of them are not known.

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS.

221. The book of Proverbs consists of three parts. In the first part (i.-ix.) Solomon, on whom the gift of wisdom had been bestowed, appropriately extols its value, and warns men against foolishness. By wisdom he means once at least the son of God; but usually the power of seeing and doing what is acceptable to God: its excellence is brought out in a series of poetical discourses, some of them very short, and others tolerably long; but few proverbs or sententious sayings are found in this section.

[1] 2 Sam. i. 18; xxiii. 1; xxii. 1; Isa. xxxviii. 9; Hab. iii. 1; Prov. i., x., xxx.

When we consider that Solomon wrote 1005 songs, it seems highly probable that these detached pieces on wisdom and foolishness are an inspired selection from them, prefixed perhaps by the men of Hezekiah to the book of Proverbs; because it was the object of both songs and proverbs to teach men true wisdom. The *second* part of the book (x.-xxix.) contains the proverbs of Solomon, pithy sayings, which could be easily remembered and applied. Few of them do more than state the facts of experience: some assign a reason, and several give lengthened descriptions of virtuous or vicious conduct.[1] Sometimes truth is vividly imparted by a comparison with familiar objects: "as snow in summer, so honour is not seemly for a fool." In other cases, the proverb is twofold, first stating one fact, and then heightening its force by another of a similar kind: "many will entreat the favour of the prince, and every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts." Not unfrequently the blessings of a certain line of conduct are followed by the dangers of the opposite, —"A soft answer turneth away wrath; but grievous words stir up anger." The *third* part of the book (xxx. xxxi.) contains some sayings of an unknown person, named Agur, and of the mother of Prince Lemuel, about whom nothing is known with certainty.

222. The Proverbs of Solomon furnish us with an insight into the manners and customs of the age in which they were written. The people of Palestine lived less on vegetable food at that time than they now do: the tables of the wealthy were supplied with fat oxen; and birds, roes, and other animals were snared or hunted for ornament as well as food. Persons of inferior rank obtained food and clothing from lambs; and goat's milk was an important article of diet. The poorer classes lived on herbs and fruits, which they gathered for themselves, or purchased at a small price from others. Sometimes, after a deficient harvest, corn-dealers kept the grain out of the market for the purpose of raising the price; and this violation of the law greatly increased the sufferings of the poor. Wine, mixed with

[1] Especially from Prov. xxii. 17 to xxv.

water, was used by the temperate; in hot weather the wealthy cooled it with snow from Lebanon. Gluttony and drunkenness were not unfrequent; inflamed eyes, and brawls ending in personal injury to those engaged in them, are mentioned as the usual results of indulgence in strong drink. When the reeling drunkard staggered and fell, he could not extract the thorn which entered his hand. Other articles of food are referred to: honey-comb was easily procured, vinegar was used, fig-trees were very valuable, and cakes of figs or grapes, pressed together and dried in the sun, were esteemed an excellent preserve.

223. The state of society is also glanced at in the Proverbs. Theft had apparently become so common that the punishment laid down in the law was made more severe; instead of restoring two or five-fold, the offender now restored seven-fold, unless *seven* be used in the sense of completeness. Bands of robbers having a common purse existed in several parts of the country, and robbed, if they did not murder, the traveller. Repeated allusions are made to false witnessing in the courts of law, to the forcible removal of landmarks, to the use of unjust balances, and the practice of usury. The songs on wisdom and foolishness in the first part of the book, prove that the seventh commandment was more frequently broken than any other; and that prostitutes were allowed openly to corrupt the youth on the streets of Jerusalem. But the last chapter of the book gives a pleasant sketch of the activity and thrift of a virtuous Hebrew matron. She supplied all the members of the family with clothes, spun, woven, and made by herself and her maids; she wrought unceasingly in wool, fine linen, and purple,[1] rising before dawn and gathering her maids around the lamp at night; her household were so industrious that she made money by the underclothing,[2] girdles, and cushions, which they manufactured for the merchants; and the poor never applied to her for relief in vain. "An evil eye" was commonly believed in by the less

[1] Not silk, as in our version, ver. 24.

[2] In ver. 24, "fine linen" should be "a wide garment of linen, worn under the other clothes."

intelligent; but Solomon was aware of that folly, and used the phrase in a metaphorical sense. Gold and silver ornaments of various designs, bracelets, and necklaces, were worn by the upper ranks. Mirrors of polished metal appear to have been then little used. Ointment and perfume were luxuries peculiar to both sexes; small bottles, filled with strong smelling ointment, were carried in the right hand. The allusions to water seem singular to natives of Britain. "Stolen waters are sweet," referring to its scarcity and value; "a well of life," or "a fountain of life," for *fresh water*, where the highly figurative language shows the preciousness of water. Although the country was thickly peopled in Solomon's days, beasts of prey were not uncommon. Hunters robbed the bear of its whelps, and "the roaring lion and raging bear" are mentioned. Jackals abounded in the neighbourhood of cities, and "evening wolves" were the terror of sheepfolds. Eagles also were snared for their feathers, or, what is equally probable, to ornament the houses of the wealthy.

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES.

224. Ecclesiastes is the Greek word for the Hebrew *Koheleth*, the person who convenes an assembly, or the preacher. Solomon is not mentioned in Scripture as the writer of this book, but the allusions which it contains to madness, folly, and wisdom, to the slaves, the herds, the treasures that the author acquired above all that were before him, and the facts that he was king "over Israel in Jerusalem," and the son of David, sufficiently prove that it came from his pen. The question discussed in it is one which excited much interest and speculation in ancient times, viz., what is the *summum bonum*, or highest good, in the world? Should a man consider sensual pleasure, worldly honour, the acquisition of knowledge, or the pursuit of wisdom the great end of life? Solomon studied this important point; he reduced his speculations to practice on a scale incompetent to any but himself; and when taught by bitter experience what was evil and

what was good in life, he recorded his experiments in this book. He shows that many things in the world, though apparently good, are really evil,—vanity of vanities, in which there is no profit. On the other hand, experience taught Solomon that wisdom alone, or the fear of God, is good, and "by it there is profit to them that see the sun."

225. The book of Ecclesiastes may thus be divided into three parts. In the first (i.-vi. 9), Solomon records the various ways in which he sought happiness, becoming again in imagination what he once was, engaged in extensive public works, in inquiries into natural history, or in gathering riches and everything that ministered to his state and pleasure; but the result of them all was "vanity and vexation of spirit." This part of the book of Ecclesiastes corresponds to the first part of the book of Proverbs. The latter contains principally the blessings of wisdom; the former, the unhappiness of folly. In the Proverbs, a series of word-pictures is drawn, representing the excellence of wisdom; and the same plan is adopted in Ecclesiastes to show the unsatisfactory nature of all earthly good. The second part of Ecclesiastes (vi. 10-xi. 10) contains a number of proverbs and short essays, illustrating the nature of wisdom, and the best means of attaining it. Wise men, for example, frequent the house of mourning, and receive with thankfulness the rebuke of friends: they obey the prince, and "regard the oath of God;" their wisdom "is better than weapons of war," and "is profitable to direct" in the most ordinary affairs of life. It is evident from these examples, that Solomon uses the word *wisdom* in a more comprehensive sense in this book than in the book of Proverbs: in the latter it means piety, or the fear of God; in the former, science or knowledge in all the relations of life. But however excellent wisdom may be, Solomon confesses that it too is not without its attendant sorrows. One of its first and most mortifying discoveries is, that "there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not;" another, which greatly perplexed believers in ancient times, was the temporal prosperity of the wicked, and the misfortunes of the just, contrary to what

man would expect under the government of a righteous and almighty Judge. "These all are vanity." In the third part of the book (xii.), Solomon gives the results of his speculations and experience: (1.) "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth; and (2.) "Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

SONG OF SOLOMON, OR CANTICLES.

226. The first verse of this book is, "The song of songs, which is Solomon's;" that is, the best song which Solomon composed, if not the best that can be written. If we bear in mind that he wrote 1005 songs altogether, and that one of them describes the Godhead of Christ, and another the blessings of His everlasting reign (Prov. viii.; Ps. lxxii.), it will be impossible to maintain that the best of his songs could treat of anything less glorious. Canticles is written in the form of a dialogue between Shelomoh, the Hebrew name of Solomon, and Shulamith, the feminine form of the word; a chorus of Hebrew virgins, and two brothers of Shulamith, are also introduced. It describes, in the glowing language of poetry, the happiness of wedded love, and the dangers Shulamith willingly encountered for the sake of her beloved. Perhaps the poem was written on the occasion of Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter; but, as we have seen above, it has a much deeper significance than a mere bridal song. Commentators have generally regarded it as an allegorical representation of the union and love between Christ and His spouse, the Church; and this is rendered more probable by the fact, that the marriage union is frequently thus employed in Scripture. Examples are found in Ps. xlv.; Isa. liv. 5, 6; Hos. ii. 14-23; Eph. v. 23-27. The Song of Songs is pervaded throughout by a poetic love of the beauties of nature, and gives several interesting proofs of the magnificence which Solomon introduced into the Hebrew court. There does not seem sufficient reason for maintaining that the allusions to Solomon's vineyards, warriors, fortifications, palaces, and chariots are ideal; they refer to matters

of fact, which throw light on the history of the time, although used by the inspired writer to illustrate spiritual things.

THE PROPHETS.

227. The prophets, whom Jehovah raised up at different times to communicate his purposes to men, held an important position in the Jewish state. As messengers of Jehovah, empowered to maintain his authority, they claimed the right of advising the sovereign, controlling his actions, and sharply reproving him for a policy contrary to the law. They were thus checks upon the arbitrary power of the sovereign, guardians of the liberties of the subject, and faithful witnesses of the allegiance all classes owed to God as king of the Hebrew commonwealth. After the revolt of the ten tribes, the prophets discharged another important duty; they kept the people of both kingdoms alive to the unity of the twelve tribes before God. In their sermons, songs, and other writings, they taught that Ephraim and Judah were equally the people of God, and bound to obey him. A political separation had taken place, and a new religion had been set up among the ten tribes; the prophets made no remark upon the former, because it was of Divine authority, but they utterly condemned the latter. One God, one faith, one Messiah, to both Judah and Ephraim, are always enforced in their writings, and the consciousness of unity was thus kept alive till the time of Christ.

228. It will occur to every one that the prophets would encourage believers to a lively faith, and a consistent walk, especially when immorality or idolatry prevailed in the nation. They would also expound to them the law, and communicate revelations which they received from God. But they discharged a higher duty than any of these: they revealed the coming of Messiah, his person, government, and work. Of the time of his appearing, no definite idea was communicated to any of them except Daniel; but they agreed in referring it to "the great and terrible day of the Lord." In the want of definite measures of

time, the prosperity of the Church, and the overthrow of heathen or impious enemies, were referred to that day. From this circumstance it sometimes happens, that the immediate and the distant future are represented as parts of the same series of events, although separated in reality by several hundred years. Repentance, according to Joel, would remove the famine and locusts from which Judah was suffering; and "in the day of the Lord," it would also be blessed with the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. The hearers of the prophet might imagine that both of these events would come to pass at the same time, but seven hundred years elapsed between them. Besides predicting the coming of Christ, all the prophets described the downfall of the kingdoms by which the chosen people were oppressed. This overthrow of the nations stands in immediate connexion with the coming of Messiah. His kingdom shall rule over all, but before it can be established, the monarchies of the world must be destroyed. Babylon, Edom, Assyria, Egypt, and other nations, represented the dominion of evil which it should be the office of Messiah to put down. Hence that passing of the cup of God's wrath round the kingdoms of the earth which is found in the prophetical books: Satan must be vanquished by Christ; and the prophets assigned the victory to "the day of the Lord."

229. Some of the predictions uttered by the Hebrew prophets referred to the immediate future, and were fulfilled in their own lifetime; others did not come to pass until several generations after they were delivered; but most of them relate to the times of Christ, and the history of the Christian Church. An example or two will illustrate these points. Isaiah foretold the capture of Damascus by the Assyrians before his infant son could cry, My father! my mother! The same prophet also predicted the overthrow of Sennacherib a few days before his army was destroyed by a blast or angel. Jeremiah, speaking to one of the false prophets, said, "This year thou shalt die," and repeatedly warned his countrymen that Jerusalem would be taken in a few months. In some cases the fulfilment of the prophecy took place sixty or seventy years after it was uttered. Thus

Isaiah predicted in 741 B.C., that Ephraim would cease to be a people in sixty-five years,[1] and Jeremiah assigned seventy as the length of the Babylonish captivity. The prophecies also differ from each other in another very important respect. Some are general intimations, shadowing forth coming events in dark and mysterious language, while others are so minute that they seem a history of the past, not a prediction of the future. A few examples of the latter may be of use. Isaiah predicted the very name of the Persian king by whom the exiled Jews would be restored to their native land; the same prophet has written a life of Christ so minutely accurate, that it might be mistaken for a record of events which had already happened—not a narrative of trials, sufferings, and honours, in ages long after the prophet's death. The minuteness with which historical events are predicted in the book of Daniel, has induced several to call in question the genuineness of his writings. He foretold with remarkable precision the wars between the Greek princes of Syria and Egypt, who made the Holy Land the scene of contest for supremacy; but these details, as we have seen, are not unusual, and they are less marked in Daniel than in Isaiah.

230. As "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," it may be desirable to exhibit at one view the principal predictions relating to the person, kingdom, and work of Messiah. A better idea will thus be obtained of the clearness and fulness with which the coming and greatness of Christ were foretold; but it must be borne in mind that many Messianic predictions are necessarily excluded from the following table:—

[1] Esarhaddon, in 676 B.C. perhaps, carried away those left by Shalmaneser, thus completing the ruin of Ephraim, and fulfilling the prophecy. See Ezra iv. 2.

PROPHECIES RELATING TO

	1. Antediluvian Church.	2. Patriarchal Church.	3. Church during Reigns of David and Solomon.
I. A Deliverer....	(1.) Triumphant, Gen. iii. 15.	(1.) A universal king: "Shiloh; to him the obedience of nations," Gen. xlix. 10.	(1.) God anointed with Holy Spirit, Ps. xlv. (2.) Son of God, Ps. ii. (3.) Having eternal dominion, Ps. lxxii. (4.) David's Lord and King, Ps. cx.
		(2.) A prophet, Deut. xviii. 18.	. . .
	(2.) Suffering, Gen. iii. 15.	. . .	A royal priest, Ps. cx.
II. A Man.....	"Her seed," Gen. iii. 15; that is, "made of a woman," Gal. iv. 4.	Seed of Abraham, Gen. xii. 3. Seed of Judah, Gen. xlix. 10; 1 Chron. v. 2.	(1.) Seed of David, 2 Sam. vii. (2.) Lowly, despised, pierced, a worm, Ps. xxii. (3.) Who should die and be buried, Ps. xvi. (4.) Who should rise again, without seeing corruption, Ps. xvi.
III. His work....	To give rest "from our work and toil of our hands," Gen. v. 29.	To bestow blessings on mankind, Gen. xii. 3.	(1.) To fill the places with dead bodies, etc., Ps. cx. (2.) To save the souls of the needy, Ps. lxxii.

MESSIAH GIVEN TO

4. Church during Period from Uzziah to Hezekiah.	5. Church during and after Captivity.
(1.), (2.), (3.) and (4.) of the last age, with much more clearness and fulness, by Isaiah.	
(5.) The nature of His dominion fully described, Isa. xi.	"His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him," Dan. vii. 27.
(6.) All other kingdoms to be overthrown "in the day of the Lord."	
The great Teacher, Isa. ii. 1-4.	
(1.) The Bearer of sin, Isa. liii.	(1.) The Lord our righteousness, Jer. xxiii. 6.
(2.) The Intercessor.	(2.) Who should finish transgression, Dan. ix. 24.
(1.), (2.), (3.), (4.) of the last age, given with much more clearness and fulness by Isaiah.	(1.) Date of his coming foretold, Dan. ix. 24.
(5.) Who should have a numerous offspring, Isa. liii.	(2.) The Desire of all nations, Hag. ii. 7.
(6.) Who should be born in Bethlehem, Mic. v. 2.	
(1.) To rescue his people from the bondage of sin, Isa. lii.	(1.) "My servant David shall feed them, and shall be their shepherd," Ezek. xxxiv. 23.
(2.) To accomplish the pleasure of Jehovah, Isa. liii.; so John xvii. 4.	(2.) He "shall be a fountain for sin and for uncleanness," Zech. xiii. 1.

BOOK OF ISAIAH—B.C. 765–698.

231. Isaiah, the son of Amoz, flourished during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah; probably he began to prophesy in the last year of Uzziah's life (vi. 1). Two of his sons are mentioned by name, and his wife is called the prophetess, but nothing more is known with certainty regarding his personal history. The Jews have a tradition that he belonged, like Daniel, to the royal family, and was sawn asunder by Manasseh.

232. The book of Isaiah contains chiefly the sermons which he delivered to the court and people. Foreign invasion and public immorality had brought the nation to the brink of ruin; and his writings were intended to rebuke the wicked, and to cheer the desponding, to condemn the ungodly policy of the times, and especially to direct the attention of men to the great Deliverer, whom every age had been expecting since the days of Eve. The prophecies relating to Christ divide the book into four parts:—

(1.) *The introduction* (i.-v.), written probably during the reign of Ahaz, describes the mournful state to which the nation was reduced by heathenism and immorality; and, in contrast to this, draws a bright picture of the happiness that shall fill the land "in the day of the Lord." The Saviour appears here as the bestower of blessings on all nations.

(2.) The next section (vi.-ix.) contains a description of the *person of Christ* in language clear as noonday, compared with that used in the morning of the Church's history; Isaiah's appointment to the prophetical office forming an appropriate introduction to it. When reverses befell the nation, and the hope of temporal prosperity grew fainter, prophets in greater numbers, and in clearer language, exhorted men to look forward to brighter days under the reign of Messiah: present misery was used by them as a *foil* to set off the greatness of future happiness. This is especially the case in the book of

Isaiah: the present and the future are so mixed up that the prophet, by passing without intimation from the one to the other, renders it sometimes difficult to ascertain his meaning. A deliverer then is promised, by whom the misery of the chosen people, and the triumphs of their enemies, shall both be brought to an end at once. This section was written about the second year of the reign of Ahaz.

(3.) The nature and greatness of Christ's kingdom form the subject of the next section.—(x.-xxxix.) In the outset, a full account is given of the blessings which the deliverer will bestow on the whole world in "the day of the Lord."—(xi. xii.) His kingdom, however, cannot co-exist with others: it alone shall fill the earth, and every hostile power shall be overthrown. Hence the prophet passes the cup of wrath round the nations—Babylon, Moab, Syria, Egypt, Edom, Tyre, and Assyria. Heathen Judah itself and Ephraim, the worst embodiments of a worldly spirit, shall be struck down before this king, for their opposition will be greater than that of other people. Contrasted with the ruin which must thus come upon the earth, are the songs of deliverance which will be sung by the subjects of Messiah, when God destroys "the covering cast over all people." The chapters (xxxvi.-xxxviii.) which give an account of the Assyrian invasion, and the overthrow of Sennacherib, seem out of place. In reality, however, they are in close connexion with chapter xxxv.; the latter describes the blessings of Messiah's kingdom, and the happiness of his ransomed subjects; the former show how that kingdom will be established, and these subjects redeemed.

(4.) The remainder of the book (xl.-lxvi.) contains the *work* of Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel. In the previous sections, the person and kingdom of the Saviour are described; but the phrase, *Jehovah the Redeemer*, is not used: in this section it is found at least ten times. Isaiah first describes, under the work of Christ, the utter inability of any other to give salvation; and then, the rays of Divine truth suddenly converging to a focus, the sufferings, death, and triumph of Messiah.—(lii. liii.) The Re-

deemer is compared to Moses; the deliverance he effects, to the flight from Egypt; he is represented "as cut off out of the land of the living," as "laid in the grave," and, immediately after, as triumphing on the battle-field, and sharing in the spoils of victory. These two chapters contain a series of sublime contradictions, which can be reconciled only in Jesus Christ. Various discourses are added (liv.-lxvi.), in which the prophet explains the blessings of this redemption, and describes the progress of the Church, illustrated throughout by allusions to the mournful condition of his countrymen.

Isaiah frequently uses the phrase "the Holy One of Israel," although it occurs very seldom elsewhere in the Old Testament: he also constantly employs "to be called," where we would expect "to be."

BOOK OF JEREMIAH—628-562 B.C.

233. Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, one of the priests of Anathoth, was called to the prophetical office in early youth, and entered on it in the thirteenth year of Josiah, about five years before the reformation effected by that monarch in the national worship. He was naturally of a gentle and retiring disposition, but he manifested no shrinking from duty when commanded at the risk of his own life "to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, and to build, and to plant, according to the word of God." In his first discourses he denounced the sins, and foretold the punishment of Judah: in her skirts was found, but "not by secret search, the blood of poor innocents;" she said "to a stock, thou art my father! and to a stone, thou hast brought me forth!" she had "changed her glory for that which did not profit;" and she had relied on the help of Egypt more than on the protection of her Divine king. War, pestilence, and drought had been sent, but Judah "refused to be ashamed." Another evil was preparing for this doomed and guilty land: "evil appeareth out of the north . . . a mighty nation whose quiver is as an open sepulchre . . . and they shall eat up thine harvest, and impoverish thy fenced

cities." These predictions of the Babylonian invasion, and these faithful reproofs of the national wickedness, so inflamed the anger of Jeremiah's townsmen and relatives in Anathoth, that they forbade him to prophesy in the name of Jehovah, lest they should be constrained to put him to death.—(xi. 21 ; xii. 6.) Perhaps this induced him to leave Anathoth, and to take up his residence in Jerusalem, where Josiah had begun to reform the national worship. The godliness of the king, however, produced no change on the sentiments and faith of the people, or on the denunciations of the prophet; the former may have been cloaked over during the reign of Josiah, but the latter became more severe. By the type of a linen girdle, which he was told to bury on the banks of the Euphrates, and dig up "many days" after, he showed that God would "mar the pride of Judah," and that the destroyer should come from that quarter. A grievous famine was the first of God's messengers against the guilty people: "the nobles sent their little ones to the waters, and found no water . . . the hind also calved in the field, and forsook its young one, because there was no grass." Death by the sword and captivity were next threatened ; but so terrible were the judgments Jeremiah was called on to foretell, that he exclaimed in grief, "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife, and a man of contention to the whole land! I have neither lent on usury, nor have men lent to me on usury, yet every one of them doth curse me."—(xv. 10.) He was forbidden to marry, and to bring up sons and daughters, "for the sin of Judah was written with a pen of iron," and its day of misery would not be long delayed. Perhaps these discourses were delivered in the reign of Josiah, when the friendship of the king would protect the prophet from the vengeance of those, whose crimes and practices he condemned.—(i.-xvii.)

234. In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim, we find Jeremiah arraigned by "the priests and the prophets" for predicting "that the temple should be made like Shiloh, and that Zion should become a curse to all the nations of the earth." He was saved from death through the friendly offices of Ahikam,

one of the princes of Judah. About four years after (606 B.C.), Jeremiah predicted the seventy years' captivity, during which the land should be "a desolation and an astonishment," on account of the rejection of all God's prophets by the Jews. But Judah was not doomed to fall alone. Jeremiah passed the "same wine-cup of God's fury" to Pharaoh, the Philistines, Edom, and the neighbouring nations; and at last Babylon itself was made "perpetual desolations," (xxv.) About the same time the prophet, who was then "shut up, and unable to go into the house of the Lord," employed his friend Baruch to write out all the predictions he had uttered, and requested him to read the roll in the court of the temple on the fast-day. The princes, astonished at Jeremiah's boldness, but conscious that he spoke the truth, advised Baruch to leave the roll with them, and conceal himself and his friend before the matter could reach the king. Jehoiakim showed his contempt for the Divine warnings and threatenings by cutting the roll with a knife, and throwing it into the fire; but another roll was written, containing some additional prophecies, and among them one concerning Jehoiakim: "He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost; and I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity."—(xxxvi.)

235. Jeremiah continued to prophesy during the reign of Coniah, the successor of Jehoiakim; but only one of the predictions uttered at that time has been recorded. It was spoken against the king himself, and contains the remarkable words, "though thou, Coniah, were the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence." Ninety years after, Zerubbabel, the great grandson of this prince, was thus addressed by Haggai: "I will take thee, . . . and will make thee as a signet: for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts." The vision of the good and bad figs was given to Jeremiah shortly after the dethronement and exile of Coniah (xxiv.) It was probably a little before this time that Jeremiah illustrated God's sovereign power in dealing with the nations, by the type of a potter's power

over the clay. Soon after, he assembled the priests and the elders of the people in the valley of Hinnom, and gave them a brief but harrowing description of the miseries hanging over Jerusalem. He then delivered a similar address to the people in the temple; but Pashur, the governor, scourged him for his boldness, and put his feet in the stocks. Next morning, Pashur, whose name means *prosperity round about*, released the prophet, and was saluted with the new and terrible name, Magor-missabib, *terror round about:* he and the friends, whom his lying prophecies had seduced, should experience all the miseries of the siege and the captivity. Jeremiah keenly felt the thankless task in which he was engaged. Friends and neighbours watched for his halting, and made him their derision; and he was so affected by the predictions of violence, spoil, and misery, which he was constrained to utter, that he cursed the day of his birth: sometimes he resolved to abstain from preaching, but the word of God was "a burning fire shut up within his bones, and he was weary with forbearing," (xviii.-xx.) Another important event in Jeremiah's life took place about this time: he exhorted Zedekiah, on his accession to the throne, to submit to Nebuchadnezzar, and promised him prosperity if he should obey. False prophets, however, persuaded the sovereign to despise Jeremiah, and publicly branded him as a lying prophet. The fate of Hananiah, one of these unhappy men, has been already referred to (xxvii. xxviii.)

236. The next prophecies of Jeremiah, which have reached our times, were delivered during the Chaldean invasion, in the reign of Zedekiah. That weak-minded prince knew his duty; but was restrained from doing it by fear of his nobles, and by other considerations. When Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem, messengers were sent from the palace to inquire of Jeremiah the result of the war. No prospect of deliverance was held out; but the capture and sack of the city were distinctly foretold (xxi.) The prophet's faithfulness brought him into trouble, for Zedekiah ordered him to be thrown into prison, but he was soon liberated. He showed his faith at this time in God's threatenings and promises, by purchasing his cousin's field

in Anathoth, although he had recently predicted that the land should be a desolation for seventy years. When the Chaldean army broke up from Jerusalem to meet the Egyptians, Jeremiah prepared to leave the city after foretelling the return and triumph of the enemy. The captain at the gate, however, apprehended him on a charge of deserting to the Chaldeans, and he was thrown into prison. The severity of his treatment was mitigated by the kindness of Ebed-melech, an Ethiopian in Zedekiah's service; but the prophet continued in confinement until set free by Nebuchadnezzar. He afterwards went to Egypt (§ 197); where he died after 562 B.C.—(lii. 31.)

237. The mournful strains of this prophet are seldom enlivened by glimpses of the future glory of Zion. The widowhood and sad desolation of his native country fill his heart to bursting in his prophecies and lamentations. He denounces vengeance on her unfaithful princes and people, and he describes in strongly poetic language the doom of her cruel enemies; but it was one of his griefs, that few predictions of Messiah's greatness and conquests were communicated to cheer the gloom of present misery. Faith enabled him to take hold of God as the hope and portion of Israel; and revelation disclosed to him Messiah as "the Lord our Righteousness;" but his book does not contain more specific descriptions of the Redeemer.

BOOK OF EZEKIEL—595-574 B.C.

238. The prophecies of Ezekiel, like those of Jeremiah, describe the future glory much less than the present backslidings of the Church. The certainty of punishment for sin, the wickedness of Judah, and the overthrow of the Church's enemies, are the subjects principally treated of by Ezekiel. According to his own account, he was of the priestly order, and was perhaps taken to Babylon along with Jehoiachin in 599 B.C. Some have supposed that the thirtieth year, mentioned in the beginning of his book, means the thirtieth year of his age; but it is more probably the thirtieth year from the foundation of the

Babylonian monarchy by Nabopolassar in 625 B.C., or from the famous passover held by Josiah when all western Palestine was again united under one sceptre. No further particulars relating to Ezekiel's personal history have been recorded, except that he was married, and that his wife died very suddenly as a sign to the "hard-hearted scorpions" of the captivity. The elders of Israel appear to have held this prophet in high estimation, at least they frequently inquired at him of the Lord.

239. The prophecies of Ezekiel may be divided into three parts. (1.) The section (chap. i.-xxiv.) contains the inauguration of the prophet into office, reproofs of his ungodly countrymen, visions of the sins practised in Jerusalem, threatenings against the false prophets and prophetesses by whom the Hebrews were deceived, and a prediction of the Messiah.[1] Daniel and Ezekiel differ from all former prophets in the character of their symbolical language. Creatures of incongruous shape and terrible aspect are employed to denote wisdom, strength, cruelty, kings, and empires. The cedars of Lebanon, which Isaiah used to denote the great men of his time, suited the country of Palestine ; but Daniel and Ezekiel lived in a land where creatures, similar to those described in their writings, might be seen sculptured on the public buildings. Ezekiel uses this peculiar imagery much less than Daniel ; but the resemblance between the creatures of their visions, and the sculptured animals brought from the empire in which they were captives, is sufficiently striking to deserve notice. The representation of the siege of Jerusalem on a tile, with the mounts, the forts, the camp, and the battering-rams, is precisely the same as the pictures of sieges seen on the ancient sculptures of Assyria.[2] Silk also is mentioned for the first time in Scripture by Ezekiel. (2.) In the second part of his book (xxv.-xxxix.), Ezekiel describes the downfal of all the ancient nations, Israel included. The kingdoms of this world must be overthrown to make way for the kingdom of Christ. (3.) The

[1] Ezek. xvii. 22-24.

[2] The 390 years of "the iniquity of the house of Israel" are reckoned from 976 B.C., the revolt of the Ten Tribes to 587 B.C., the destruction of Jerusalem. It is not so easy to explain the forty years of the iniquity of the house of Judah.

third part contains the return of the captives, ordinances for the prince and people, and a new division of the land among the twelve tribes. These chapters are very obscure, but they seem to refer to the glory of Messiah's kingdom, rather than to another settlement of the Jews in Palestine.

240. The prophecies against Tyre in this book are remarkable for the vivid picture they contain of the wealth and trade of that great city. Ezekiel leads us, as it were, to the harbour, the fortifications, and the bazaars; describing, as he passes along, the various objects which meet the eye, and mentioning the places from which they came. Every country in those days contributed to the wealth, the luxury, and the power of Tyre: she was "a perfect beauty," the queen of the world; "all the ships of the sea" were found in her harbour; all the precious commodities of the earth were sold in her streets. As these predictions contain the best account that has reached our day, of the enterprise and speculation of the Tyrian merchants, it may be desirable to give an analysis of the twenty-seventh chapter, in which Ezekiel recounts the iniquity, the extensive commerce, the overflowing wealth, and the doom of Tyre. In the first part of that chapter (ver. 1-9), the prophet describes what seems to be a Tyrian pleasure boat, from which alone a just idea might be formed of the luxurious habits, the world-wide resources, and the power of Tyre. Mount Hermon (Shenir), furnished cypress wood for the deck; Lebanon, cedar for the masts; the oars were made of oak from Bashan; the seats, of cedar inlaid with ivory. The flag was of embroidered linen from Egypt; the awnings, to protect pleasure-seekers from the sun, of purple, wrought at Elis on the coast of the Peloponnesus. Arvad, an island off the coast of Phœnicia, and Zidon sent rowers; the sailors belonged to Tyre itself; skilful builders and carpenters came from Gebal, a city in the neighbourhood. The second part of this chapter (ver. 10, 11) gives a brief account of the mercenary soldiers who defended the walls of Tyre. Persia, Lydia in Africa, and Lybia (Phut), are named as the countries from which they were drawn; but the men of Arvad were more

trustworthy than these foreigners, and appear to have furnished the warriors (Gammadim), by whom the towers on the city walls were manned. In the third part of the chapter (ver. 12-25), the prophet gives a list of the commodities exposed for sale in the bazaars of ancient Tyre, and the countries from which they came: the enumeration is curious:—

From Tarshish came silver, iron, tin, and lead.

From Javan, which usually means Greece, but is here perhaps a town of Arabia, from Tubal and Mesech, nations in Asia Minor, came slaves and copper vessels.

Togarmah (Armenia) supplied horses and mules.

Dedan (perhaps Southern Arabia) sent ivory, ebony, and riding-cloths.

Syria furnished emeralds, purple and linen, coral and rubies.

Judah and Israel sent wheat of Minnith (a town on the borders of Ammon, from which, therefore, the grain was conveyed by an expensive land carriage to Joppa or Tyre), pastry (Pannag), (made in the bazaars, perhaps by the Hebrew traders), honey, oil, and balm.

Damascus sent wine of Helbon (perhaps Aleppo), and fine wool.

The merchants of Dan and Greece furnished iron, cassia, and sweet cane.

Arabia and Kedar sold sheep and goats.

Sheba, in Arabia Felix, and Raamah, perhaps a town on the Persian Gulf, sent spices, gems, and gold.

Several places in Mesopotamia supplied splendid garments, embroidered work, and "roped bales of variegated cloth."

Tyre was both a manufacturing city, and a place where the merchants of different countries might exchange their commodities. The prophet mentions what other nations exposed for sale in her bazaars, not the goods with which her artisans supplied the world.

BOOK OF DANIEL—606-534 B.C.

241. The book of Daniel consists of two parts, a historical and a prophetical. In the former, Daniel is spoken of in the third person, though that is not a sufficient reason for assigning the authorship to another; in the latter he speaks in the first person. As the historical events related in this book have been already considered, an examination of these is unnecessary at present. The first vision which Daniel saw, came by night in the first year of Belshazzar's reign; it shows more clearly than any

former prophecies, the relation of Christ's kingdom to the kingdoms of the world. Four empires, represented by four symbolical beasts, arose in succession; the last was divided among ten kings, three of whom were subdued by an eleventh, who appeared afterwards. The saints of the Most High, after experiencing many hardships from the eleventh king, at last triumphed over all their enemies, and obtained everlasting dominion under the Son of Man. It is generally supposed that the four empires were the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman; the ten kings, the different states into which the Roman Empire was ultimately divided; and the eleventh king, the Papal power. Two years after, Daniel, when "in deep sleep," saw another vision on the banks of the Ulai, near Shushan: he was then engaged in business of state, but at a distance from the court. A ram was seen pushing westward, northward, and southward: suddenly a he-goat, with a large horn in its forehead, came swiftly from the west; the two engaged in deadly fight, and the ram was killed. The horn of the goat was then broken off, and four others grew in its place; but from one of these came forth a little horn, that spread out, especially "toward the pleasant land." The inspired writer states that the ram was Persia; the horn in the goat, the king of Greece, *i.e.*, Alexander the Great; and the four horns, his successors: it is supposed that the fifth or little horn, who took away the daily sacrifice for 2300 days, was Antiochus Epiphanes.—(vii. viii.)

242. The ninth chapter of this book contains the prayer of Daniel for the restoration of Jerusalem, and a prediction of the coming of Messiah. An angel informed him that seventy weeks of years should intervene from "the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince." By this commandment is undoubtedly meant the decree of Artaxerxes (B.C. 458), which allowed the city to be fortified, gave Jewish governors the power of life or death, and made the Mosaic law again the code of Palestine. From the issuing of that edict, to our Lord's death, was an interval of about 490 years. In the third year of Cyrus, "Daniel was mourning three

full weeks," perhaps on account of the success of the Samaritans in persuading the king to order the building of the wall and temple of Jerusalem to cease. An angel appeared to the prophet, and minutely described to him the wars between Egypt and Syria, in which Judea was often the battle-ground. Notwithstanding the precision and clearness of some of these predictions, there are others that critics find it extremely difficult to interpret; for example, the series of predictions from xi. 30, to xii. 13, is referred to the persecution under Antiochus, to the Papacy, or to both. It is also worthy of mention, that the accuracy with which events are narrated in this vision, has led many to call in question the authenticity of the book, and even to doubt if such a person as Daniel ever existed. But there is no just ground for such doubts. Daniel is referred to by a contemporary prophet[1] as a man eminent for wisdom and godliness; the book itself is known to have been turned into Greek, before many of the events recorded in this vision with the minuteness complained of had happened, and it is quoted as the inspired Word of God by our Lord and his disciples.—(ix.-xii.)

Part of the book of Daniel (ii. 4.-vii. 28) is written in the Chaldee language; the rest in Hebrew.

BOOK OF HOSEA—800-725 B.C.

243. The prophet Hosea prophesied for about sixty years in the period from Uzziah to Hezekiah. Judah is sometimes briefly addressed in his writings; but the sins and punishment of Samaria, Ephraim, or Jacob, as he terms the Ten Tribes, form the principal theme. The seed, which Jeroboam I. had sown, was then bearing an appropriate harvest of wickedness and misrule; Ephraim was becoming grey-headed, and knew it not. A sketch of the fearful profligacy which prevailed among the Hebrews was drawn in a former chapter, and will give some idea of the people whom Hosea was sent to threaten and reform. When he entered on his office, Jeroboam II. had wrested from the Syrians all

[1] Ezek. xiv. 14, 20, (584 B.C.)

their conquests in Palestine, and shed some rays of parting glory round the setting sun of Israel: before Hosea's death, the kingdom of Samaria was overthrown, "its king cut off as foam upon the water;" and its people "wanderers among the nations." Warning, entreaty, and threatening had been addressed without effect to the infatuated people. They had destroyed themselves; but even then God would not give them up, or inflict upon them the punishment of other nations.[1]

244. In the first three chapters of Hosea, the backsliding, the wickedness and idolatry of the Ten Tribes are represented, perhaps in vision, under the figure of an unfaithful wife, whom the prophet was commanded to marry. In the remaining chapters of the book, Hosea unfolds still further the sins and punishment of his countrymen; but his predictions are not arranged according to the order of time, or according to subjects. Hosea is quoted as a prophet in the New Testament by our Lord, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," (Matt. ix. 13); by Matthew, "Out of Egypt have I called my son," (ii. 15; xii. 7); by Paul (Rom. ix. 25, 26), and by Peter (1 Pet. ii. 10). The person and coming of Christ are not described with the clearness of other prophets; but many predictions are given of the glories and happiness of Messianic times generally.

BOOK OF JOEL.

245. It is not known with certainty when Joel flourished; but as he manifestly alludes to a prediction of Isaiah or Micah,[2] he probably lived about their time. He prophesied to Judah.

(1.) Joel first describes the calamities that had befallen the nation (i. 1-ii. 11). Calamities of various kinds had brought Judah very low. Long-continued drought threatened them with famine; the pasture lands were parched, and, in some places, even destroyed by fire; and many streams, useful for irrigating the land or watering the flocks, were dried up. Locusts, also, had entered the country from the north, and stripped it of every green thing: "the garden of Eden was before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness." So thoroughly had the fields been swept by this "northern army," that "the

[1] Hos. xi. 1.

[2] Joel, iii. 10; Isa. ii. 4; Mic. iv. 3.

meat-offering and the drink-offering were cut off from the house of the Lord."

(2.) The prophet next describes the effects of repentance (ii. 12-32). Rain would be given in abundance when the people turned to Jehovah with all their heart; the floors would be filled with corn, and the presses with wine. But these were small things compared with what God would do "afterwards, in the day of the Lord," for the repentant people. The Holy Ghost would be poured out upon them; and every one that called upon the name of the Lord would be saved, prophecies which were fulfilled after the ascension of Christ.

(3.) The miseries of war, and God's judgments upon the enemies of the Church, are next described (iii.) Neighbouring nations had invaded the land, and carried great numbers of the people into slavery. Jerusalem itself had been taken: "strangers had passed through it." Egypt and Edom had ravaged the south country, and shed much innocent blood. Tyre and Zidon had sold many Jewish captives to the Greeks; and their inhabitants must have purchased them from the Syrians, or the Ten Tribes. The prophet evidently alludes to the disasters which befell the nation in the reign of Ahaz. Deliverance, however, was at hand, for these nations would be summoned to a reckoning in "the day of the Lord."

BOOK OF AMOS—810-785 B.C.

246. Amos was a native of Tekoa, on the borders of the great southern desert, sometimes called the wilderness of Judah. He was a shepherd and a gatherer of sycamore fruit, but "neither a prophet nor a prophet's son," regularly trained to this high office: he prophesied to the ten tribes "two years before the earthquake," in the reigns of Jeroboam and Uzziah, or about 800 B.C. Many of the illustrations that he uses, as might be expected, are taken from shepherd and country life; the roaring and plundering of the lion, the biting of serpents, threshing, heavily laden carts, fishing, and so on. He is quoted twice in the New Testament, once by Stephen (Acts vii. 42), and again by James (xv. 16). He also shows a thorough knowledge of history, both recent and remote (ix. 7.; vi. 2).

247. The day of the Lord with this prophet is a day of wrath and also a day of mercy. The enemies of the chosen people are all summoned to judgment, and their fate foretold: Judah itself shall not escape; but the prophet addresses himself specially to

Israel. Its three transgressions and four, that is, its innumerable sins in breaking the law of God, are set down, intermingled with vivid descriptions of the miseries that had recently prostrated the unhappy country (iii.-vi.) Several symbolical visions, on which Amaziah, priest of Bethel, founded a charge of treason against Amos, are next related, prefiguring the judgments in store for Israel (vii.-ix. 10). Wrath, however, is tempered with mercy, "in that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen." A sifting of the true from the false Israel shall take place, and the righteous "shall no more be pulled up out of their land."

A number of peculiar phrases are found in this book. "The flood of Egypt," referring to the overflow of the Nile; "the high places of Isaac," and "the house of Isaac," where Jacob or Israel might have been expected; "the excellency of Jacob," for God; and "cleanness of teeth," for famine. By "the temple" in (viii. 3), is probably to be understood the heathen temple at Bethel.

BOOK OF OBADIAH—ABOUT 588 B.C.

248. Scripture has not furnished us with any information regarding the personal history of Obadiah; but it may be inferred from verse 20, that he lived while the Chaldeans were masters of Judah, if not, indeed, after the burning of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. His predictions contain threatenings against Edom, and promises to Judah; the terrible day of God's wrath in the one case, the day of His goodness in the other. Neither the wise men of Edom, nor their apparently inaccessible retreats among the defiles and fastnesses of Mount Seir, should deliver that country from the fury of Nebuchadnezzar. Its people had cruelly treated their Jewish brethren, "when foreigners entered the gates and cast lots upon Jerusalem;" and this crime could not pass unpunished; but promises of deliverance and holiness were held out to down-trodden and sinful Zion, when the kingdom of the Lord should be set up on earth. Nebuchadnezzar overran Edom in 583 B.C.

Several passages in the writings of Jeremiah correspond very closely with some parts of the Book of Obadiah. Thus, Jer. xlix. 7-10, and Obad. 6, 8;

Jer. xlix. 14-16, and Obad. 1-4, contain not only the same sentiments, but even the same words. It is impossible to determine, however, which of these two prophets quoted from the other.

BOOK OF JONAH.

249. Jonah, the son of Amittai, and a native of Gath-hepher in Zebulon, appears to have succeeded Elisha in the prophetical office. He foretold the success of Jeroboam II. in delivering the Ten Tribes from the oppression of the Syrians, and probably flourished during the reign of that king. He was also sent to threaten the people of Nineveh with speedy punishment for their sins; and the book which bears his name contains an account of that mission. It begins abruptly with "Now (and) the word of the Lord came unto Jonah," as if it were part of a larger work; but Ezekiel begins his prophecies in a somewhat similar manner, "Now it came to pass," and this was an ordinary introduction with Hebrew authors. Whether or not Jonah wrote the book himself is uncertain: he is spoken of in the third person, but that is not sufficient to disprove his title to the authorship.

250. When told to go to Nineveh and proclaim its impending destruction, Jonah suspected that the threatening would not be carried into effect; for he spoke from experience and history when he said, "Thou art a gracious God, . . . and repentest thee of the evil." He fled to Joppa, and paid his fare in a ship bound for Tarshish. A storm arose, and the ship was in such danger that the cargo was thrown overboard, and each man cried in terror to his god. Jonah, wearied with his rapid flight, remained fast asleep, unconscious of danger till the master awoke him and discovered that his sin had caused the storm. At his own request the sailors reluctantly threw the prophet into the sea, where a great fish swallowed him alive. He remained three days and three nights in its belly, a type of our Lord's sojourn in the grave. His prayer in that dismal place shows us, that it was usual with prophets among the Ten Tribes to pray with their faces toward the temple in Jerusalem, and to pay vows or offer sacrifices there. God at last delivered him, and he then

went to Nineveh. The walls of that city were sixty miles in circuit, and the prophet would thus take three days to pass along the street immediately within them. As he journeyed on, he cried, "Forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed." The Medes had thrown off their allegiance, and probably several of the battles which preceded the overthrow of the Assyrian empire at this time, had been already fought. The king, who may have been Sardanapalus, his nobles and people, were seized with terror when they heard the threatenings of the Hebrew stranger. A fast was proclaimed, and God's wrath was averted for a time from the city. Jonah expected to see his prediction fulfilled, and manifested great peevishness when informed that the doom of the city was delayed. It should cause no surprise that a stranger produced this effect on the people of Nineveh: he was at once recognised as a Hebrew, and neighbouring nations were not ignorant of the power of Jehovah, or of the greatness of His prophets. Besides, a Christian has been known to frighten a Mussulman town to repentance, by predicting an earthquake or a plague.

251. The book of Jonah is usually regarded as the most ancient prophetical writing that has reached our days. This must be understood in accordance with modern notions of prophecy; for Moses and David were most distinguished prophets; and the letter of Elijah to Jehoram is contained in the historical books.

252. The mission of Jonah is important in several respects. It was the second recorded visit of a Hebrew prophet in his official capacity to a foreign state, and exhibits Jehovah as the Judge of all the earth, punishing iniquity, and fixing the boundaries and power of nations at His pleasure. But this book also shows us that the nature of God must not be judged of by the character of His servants; for Jonah's low ideas of the Almighty's presence, and his selfish grumbling at God's mercy towards repentant sinners, teach us that the "treasure is in earthen vessels." Although the Old Testament contains many proofs of God's strictness in punishing iniquity, it was taught in the law, and

shown by facts that He is a God of mercy to the penitent and believing.

BOOK OF MICAH—758-699 B.C.

253. Micah flourished during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. He is called "the Morasthite," from Moresheth-Gath, his birthplace. One of his predictions (iii. 12) saved the life of Jeremiah more than a century after it was delivered.[1] The effect of his discourses on the court and people is incidentally noticed in connexion with that event: Hezekiah "feared the Lord, and besought the Lord, and the Lord repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them." Isaiah ii. 1-4, and Micah iv. 1-3, contain not only the same sentiment, but also the same words. The prophecies of Micah may be divided into three parts: (I.) The wickedness of Judah is described and reproved (i.-iii.); (II.) The establishment of Christ's kingdom and the overthrow of worldly powers, like Assyria, are foretold (iv. v.); and (III.) The forbearance and mercy of Jehovah are contrasted with the ingratitude of Israel (vi. vii.)

BOOK OF NAHUM—ABOUT 720 B.C.

254. The prophet Nahum was a native of Elkosh in Galilee, and flourished during the reign of Hezekiah, when the Assyrian invaders had plundered Judah, and were threatening to destroy its independence.[2] All classes of the community were alarmed at the progress of the enemy; and the reports which reached Jerusalem of their terrible ravages at No or Thebes, in Egypt, increased the excitement and alarm. Nahum was inspired to encourage his believing countrymen, by assuring them that "the Lord is a stronghold in the day of trouble," and that the time was at hand when men should say, "Nineveh is laid waste." He prophesied about 100 years before the destruction of that great city. The first chapter of Nahum contains a sublime

[1] Jer. xxvi. 16-19. [2] Nah. i. 11-15; iii. 8, compared with Isa. xx.

description of the character and doings of Jehovah, and a solemn exhortation to Judah to persevere in the course of reformation on which she had entered. Zion was afraid of the great king of Assyria; but the prophet reminds her citizens of a mightier Ruler, who will befriend them in the hour of danger. Their Protector does not fight with man's weapons of war; for the storm, the whirlwind, the sea, earth, and sky, are His servants. The decree was passed against Sennacherib, "I will make thy grave, for thou art vile;" and the promise was given to Judah, "the wicked one shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off." In the remainder of the book, Nahum describes, with the vividness of history, the siege of Nineveh by the Chaldeans, under the father of Nebuchadnezzar. The onset of the besiegers, the rush of their chariots through the streets, the charge of their horsemen, and the heaps of slain raised by their bright swords and glittering spears, the faintheartedness of the defenders, their unwillingness to man the wall, and the mourning of their captive wives and daughters, are drawn with singular skill and accuracy.

BOOK OF HABAKKUK—ABOUT 610 B.C.

255. Habakkuk appears to have flourished in the disastrous period that followed the death of Josiah. He mentions only the Babylonian power; represents their conquest of Palestine as at hand;[1] and even describes the public works, or the labours in "thick clay," as they are called, and the insanity of Nebuchadnezzar. Assyria was manifestly no longer formidable. The Jews suppose that he continued to live in Judah after the overthrow of the monarchy; but on this point we have no certain information. Of the three chapters into which his writings are divided, the first describes, with great force and sublimity, the wickedness, and predicts the punishment of Jerusalem by the Holy One; the second contains the pride, violence, and doom of Nebuchadnezzar; and the third, in the form of a prayer-song,

[1] Hab. i. 5, 6.

narrates the wonders wrought by God in past ages, and breathes a spirit of confidence in Him, although war and famine may lay waste the land. These predictions are remarkable for two brief statements made by the prophet. In contrast with the proud and ungodly King of Babylon, he holds up the character of the believer, "the just shalt live by his faith." The conqueror had spoiled many nations, and filled all places with blood, violence, and unrighteousness; but in the day of the Lord, "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Quoted in Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii. 11; Acts xiii. 41; Heb. x. 37, 38: quotes Isa. xiv. 4, in ii. 6; xi. 9, in ii. 14: and Ps. xviii. 33 in iii. 19.

BOOK OF ZEPHANIAH—640-623 B.C.

256. Zephaniah prophesied in the beginning of the reign of Josiah, and was contemporary with Jeremiah. He foretold events which should happen in "the day of the Lord;" some at hand, others distant. Like the other prophets, he considers that day under two aspects: (1.) "A day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, . . . a day of clouds and thick darkness;"[1] and (2.) A day of peace and happiness; "in that day . . . Jehovah will rejoice over Zion with joy, . . . and make her a name and a praise among all people of the earth."[2]

257. (1.) Zephaniah first describes the effects of God's wrath (i. ii.) He represents Jehovah celebrating a sacrifice in Jerusalem, and bidding his guests to the feast: the utter destruction of all things from off the land by the Chaldean invaders is the sacrifice; the plunder of the city, the feast. But the cup is also passed round to other nations: the cities of the Philistines shall be overthrown; Moab and Ammon, which reproached the chosen people and invaded their border, shall become "the breeding of nettles, and salt pits, and a perpetual desolation;" Ethiopia also shall fall by the sword, and within a few years Nineveh shall become "a place for beasts to lie down in." The

[1] Zeph. i. 15. [2] iii. 16-20.

last-mentioned prophecy must have been delivered before 623 B.C. (or 606 B.C.), the year in which Nineveh was taken.

258. (2.) The prophet next describes the effects of God's mercy (iii.) No promises of restoration and renewed glory are made to Gaza, Nineveh, and other cities; but "be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem." Her princes, prophets, and people have been treacherous and vile; but in the gathering of the nations, and in the pouring out on them of God's anger, the remnant of Israel shall not see evil any more. The citizens of Zion shall again celebrate the praises of Jehovah in every land.

BOOK OF HAGGAI—520 B.C.

259. The predictions of Haggai differ from those of other prophets in the singular precision with which the date of each is given. He was raised up by God to encourage the Jews in building the second temple, and delivered his predictions in the year 520 B.C., but nothing farther is known concerning him. Blasting, mildew, and hail had destroyed the labours of the husbandman; drought had fallen upon the pastures and fields; and all classes of the community were suffering from these visitations. Haggai showed his countrymen why they were sent, and how they might be removed. In his first prophecy, he told the people that God was angry, because they had laboured earnestly in building or beautifying their own houses, but had entirely neglected the temple. On the twenty-third day after, the princes and people again began to build God's house; and twenty-six days elapsed before another message came from God. The people were discouraged by the mean appearance of the temple, but the prophet foretold that it should be more glorious than the Temple of Solomon; "The desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord." Two months after this prediction, Haggai declared that though Jehovah regarded the Jews and their work as unclean, He would take away his anger and restore to them some measure of prosperity, in approval of

the readiness with which they listened to his voice. Zerubbabel was at the same time assured, that in the day of the Lord he should be honoured as the signet-ring of the King of kings.

BOOK OF ZECHARIAH—ABOUT 520 B.C.

260. Zechariah, the grandson of Iddo, was probably a member of the priestly order;[1] he began to prophesy in the second year of the reign of Darius, and was commissioned to encourage his countrymen to proceed with the erection of the temple, to quicken their zeal for the true religion, and to cheer their hearts by predicting the glories of Messiah's reign. He is called a young man; but that phrase was frequently applied to men in middle life, and we cannot infer from it the age of the prophet when he entered on his office. The book of Zechariah resembles that of Isaiah in respect of matter, and those of Ezekiel and Daniel in respect of imagery. None of the other prophets, except Isaiah, contain so many allusions to the coming and work of Christ; and the writings of Ezekiel and Daniel best furnish a parallel to the horses and chariots, carpenters, spiritual beings, and flying roll seen in vision by Zechariah. The book may be thus divided :—

I. *The introduction* (i. 1-6), containing an exhortation to his countrymen to turn from their evil doings.

II. *A series of visions* (i. 7-vi. 15), illustrating the fallen condition of Judah, the certainty of her restoration, the punishment of her enemies, and the work of the Saviour. The visions were as follows :—

(1.) A man was seen sitting on a roan horse among myrtle-trees, with white, bay, and roan horses behind him. The horses, or perhaps the riders upon them, informed the man, in the hearing of Zechariah, that the whole earth was at rest, as if the time were favourable for showing mercy to Jerusalem.

(2.) Four horns, representing four great powers, were next seen; they had scattered the chosen people, but four carpenters appeared to build up what they had thrown down.

[1] Neh. xii. 4.

(3.) In the third vision, a man with a measuring line proceeded to measure Jerusalem; but the prophet was informed that in future ages Zion should be "spread out as the four winds of heaven," and that God "should choose Jerusalem again, . . . and be unto her a wall of fire round about."

(4.) In the fourth vision, Joshua, the high priest, was seen standing before the angel of the Lord with Satan at hand to accuse him. Through the power of the angel of the Lord, the Branch out of the root of Jesse, Joshua was stripped of the filthy garments in which he was clothed, washed from his iniquities, and assured that universal happiness should prevail on earth "in the day of the Lord."

(5.) A golden candlestick, supplied with oil from two olive-trees, one on each side, was next seen; and the prophet was informed that it represented the restoration of the civil and ecclesiastical Jewish state, through the agency of Joshua and Zerubbabel.

(6.) In the sixth vision, a flying roll was seen going forth, denouncing curses against the thief and the perjurer.

(7.) An ephah, or, as we would say, a bushel, with a woman sitting in it, was next seen by the prophet. A leaden weight thrown on the mouth of the measure pressed down the woman into it, when other ten women with stork's wings carried the ephah through the air to Babylon. The woman in the ephah was Wickedness; and the vision showed that idolatry, if found among the Hebrews at all, should be sought for in the land of Shinar, not Judea.

(8.) In the last vision, four chariots, drawn by roan, white, spotted, and bay horses, were seen issuing from between two copper mountains. They represented the judgments of God, which should sweep over all the earth from his holy habitation in Mount Zion.

III. The third part of the book (vii. viii.) contains a number of discourses delivered in the fourth year of Darius, in which Zechariah assured his countrymen that the fasts observed in commemoration of the capture and burning of Jerusalem[1] should be turned into seasons of joy and gladness. A great reformation of manners would precede this important change.

IV. The fourth part (ix.-xiv.) contains the usual prophetic description of the day of the Lord, as a day of terror and a day of peace. Zechariah predicted that Messiah should then appear, "just and having salvation, . . . lowly and riding upon an ass, . . . prised at thirty pieces of silver, . . . a fountain for sin and uncleanness, . . . wounded in the house of his friends, . . . the man that is the fellow of Jehovah." At the same time the

[1] See Jewish Kalendar in the Appendix.

nations of the earth should be overthrown by this great king, especially Hadrach or Persia, Syria, Tyre, and the Philistines. In this section there is an allusion to the conquests of Alexander, and the deliverance of Jerusalem from his fury (ix. 12.-17).

261. It has been supposed that the last part of this book was written by Jeremiah; because Matthew in his Gospel (xxvii. 9, 10) ascribes the prophecy in Zech. xi. 10-14 to Jeremiah; but the best commentators are of opinion that this idea is not supported by sufficient evidence. No one denies that there is a difficulty in explaining why Matthew should ascribe the prediction to Jeremiah. Several critics imagine, what is very probable, that the word Zechariah in Matthew's Gospel was changed into Jeremiah by a mistake of some ancient copyist; but it may be possible to solve the difficulty by less violent means.

BOOK OF MALACHI—ABOUT 420 B.C.

262. The word Malachi means *my messenger;* but it may be a contraction for Malachiah, *angel of Jehovah.* Several critics have doubted whether it is a proper name or an appellative taken from Mal. iii. 1, "I will send my messenger," *i.e.*, Malachi; but it seems safer to regard the word as the name of the writer of the book. Many of the sins condemned by this prophet are the same as those that prevailed in the interval between the two administrations of Nehemiah; and it is supposed that he flourished at that time. In the introduction to the book (i. 1-5), the prophet calls attention to the difference between God's treatment of Esau and Jacob; the former was down-trodden, and yet anxious to rebuild his ruined cities; the latter was restored to his native land by the mercy of God, but careless whether true religion were established again or not. In the next part of the book (i. 6-ii. 10) the people are reproved for despising the law and counting God's service a weariness; and the priests are condemned for "departing out of the way and causing many to stumble at the law." How different shall be the state of things in the day of the Lord, when "in every place incense and

a pure offering" shall be offered to God! The third part of the book (ii. 11-iv. 6), besides describing the immorality and idolatry of the times, warns men of the approaching day of the Lord, "which shall burn as an oven . . . and be like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap." Malachi predicted that all who refused to pay tithes and offerings, who oppressed the poor and fatherless, or otherwise broke the law, should then be summoned to judgment; and that Elijah should appear before that day as the herald of the King Messiah, and of the curse with which Judea should then be smitten.

For chronological tables of events in profane history, and for a history of the Jews, from the time of Nehemiah to the birth of Christ, the reader is referred to the Appendix.

NEW TESTAMENT.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FOUR GOSPELS.

263. When our Lord left this earth, His followers were naturally anxious to keep in remembrance the wonderful sermons which He delivered, and the miracles which He wrought. No one during His lifetime had committed the former to writing, or preserved a record of the latter. Our Lord himself had spoken from the hill-top or the sea-shore, surrounded by the lilies, the corn, and the birds, which usually furnished the texts of His discourses; and His miracles had been wrought, not to be recorded for the astonishment of after ages, but to reward the faith and draw forth the love of believers. It was not meet that these sayings and doings should be forgotten. Many persons undertook to record them; but most of the books then written have perished. Four only, drawn up by men set apart for that great work by God himself, have been carefully preserved in the Church of Christ, and handed down from age to age as faithful memorials of the Saviour's life. Although treating of the same subject, they differ from each other to some extent in aim, in matter, and in style. *First*, It appears from the contents of these books that one of them was written specially for Jewish readers, and the others more particularly for Gentiles. Matthew traces the descent of Christ from Abraham: he speaks of Herod, not as ruler of Palestine, the title by which a Greek or Roman might have known him, but as "Herod the king." In his Gospel,

"John the Baptist" is introduced at once as a person with whose name readers of the book would be familiar. Twelve apostles, corresponding to the number of the Hebrew tribes, are sent out: the lost sheep of the house of Israel are mentioned as special objects of the Saviour's care; and when any allusions are made to the manners and customs of the Jews, no explanation is given. It is evident from these circumstances, that the apostle is writing to Jews familiar with the people and history of Palestine. Not so Luke. In his book Herod is "the King of Judea;" the lineage of Christ is traced back to Adam, the father of the human race; the birth and early life of John the Baptist are minutely related; Gentiles are spoken of in more favourable terms than Jews; seventy disciples, not twelve apostles only, preached Christ among men; the parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son, recorded by Luke only, were manifestly intended as a reproof to Jewish pride, and an encouragement to Gentile converts; and manners and customs, of which strangers to Palestine might be supposed ignorant, are explained. It is evident, therefore, that Luke wrote his Gospel mainly for the instruction and encouragement of Gentile believers. So strongly marked are these features of the books of Matthew and Luke, that believers in early times supposed the former to have been originally written in Hebrew for the use of Jews alone; and the latter to have been more the work of Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, than of his attendant Luke, whose name it bears. But, further, Mark carefully explains *defiled* hands in Jewish phraseology by *unwashen* hands; and defines the *preparation* as the day before the Sabbath. John also mentions the water-pots at Cana, with the remark, "after the manner of the purifying of the Jews;" he gives a somewhat minute description of Bethesda in Jerusalem,—draws the attention of his readers to the identity of the sea of Galilee with the sea of Tiberias, and calls the passover "a feast of the Jews." All these things prove, that Mark and John wrote for Gentiles more than Jews.

264. *Second*, The differences of style among the evangelists are not less striking. Mark calls up before the minds of his readers

a vivid picture of the scenes of our Lord's preaching or miracles; Matthew seldom gives prominence to these outward relations. The young ruler, according to Matthew, "came and said unto Jesus, Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" but, according to Mark, "when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him," &c. The picture drawn by the latter in this and other cases is so vivid, that we see the events taking place before our eyes, and hear the speakers making their remarks, as if we were mingling in the crowd. The simplicity of John's language admirably suits the greatness and depth of the sentiments his book contains: the series of pictures that he presents to the reader's mind, makes a deeper impression from the homely language in which they are conveyed.

265. *Third*, There are marked differences among the evangelists in the aspects under which principally they regard our Lord's person and work. In Matthew's Gospel, the Saviour is viewed chiefly as the promised Messiah and Deliverer, whom the Jewish people had been eagerly expecting for two thousand years. He is described, in accordance with ancient prophecy, as the "man of sorrows," bowed down by the guilt of others, and bearing the griefs and diseases of men; prophecy appears fulfilled; the longing hopes of thousands are realized; and once more a Jewish King sways the sceptre, not of Judah only, but of the whole earth. In John, on the other hand, the amazing abasement of Christ is contrasted with His equally amazing greatness: He is the Son of God, the Sent of the Father, the Witness of heavenly truth; in short, God himself; but, at the same time, He thirsts and hungers by the well of Samaria, He weeps in bitterness of heart at Bethany, He is railed on in the streets as a madman, less esteemed than a well-known murderer, and handed over as a prisoner to the mockery and brutality of His own creatures. The contrast between the greatness of His Godhead, and the depths of sorrow and shame to which His manhood was lowered, shines forth in every chapter of this Gospel: He appears as God, the maker and upholder of all things; and yet He lives and dies

a lowly, injured, and suffering man. The Gospels of Mark and Luke do not represent Christ in the same detail as descending so low, or raised so high. In Luke, He is held forth as the friend of all men; not a Messiah to save the Jew, but a Messiah in whom the ancient promise was fulfilled, that all nations should be blessed in the seed of Abraham. In Mark, His authority over the unseen world of spirits, His manhood, and sympathy with man, are most apparent: this evangelist has recorded the works more than the discourses of Christ. Looking at the four Gospels together, it is evident that John contrasts the greatness of God with the lowliness of man in Christ; Luke represents Him as the promised Deliverer, who should bruise the head of the serpent, and free men of all nations from the first curse; Matthew limits his view of Christ to the Shiloh of Judah, whom age after age had longed for in vain; and Mark, descending still lower, brings prominently out the links which bind Christ to His people as a man. In all of them He appears from both word and deed as God-man; but a character so greatly above our thoughts could not be fully exhausted from a single point of view, or by one writer. All four, surveying their Master from different sides, required to contribute before an accurate estimate of His nature and being could be made. Writers in the early Christian Church symbolized the four evangelists by the four faces of the cherubim seen in Ezekiel's vision. To Matthew they assigned the face of the lion; to Mark that of the man; to Luke that of the ox; and to John that of the eagle.

266. The four histories, in which the miracles and teaching of the Saviour are recorded, are called Gospels, from two Saxon words signifying *good* and *tidings:* a Greek word similarly formed, is used to denote the writers of these books, *evangelist*, or preacher of good tidings. Gospel is used in the New Testament to express the whole doctrine of salvation through Christ, or the "glad tidings of great joy to all people," predicted by the prophets. Matthew calls this body of doctrine the gospel of the kingdom; Mark the gospel of Christ, but generally the gospel; and Paul the gospel of God, the everlasting gospel, the gospel of salvation,

the gospel of peace. "The afflictions of the gospel," "the bonds of the gospel," "to live by the gospel," are phrases found in the Epistles of Paul. The gospel is also called in Scripture the testimony of Christ, because He witnesses or testifies to the faithfulness of God in keeping the promises made to the ancient Church. Evangelists, in the time of the apostles, were perhaps those who went on special missions from place to place, preaching the word or founding churches: Philip the deacon, and Timothy, were evangelists. The word "apostle" (messenger) has sometimes the same meaning as evangelist: thus Barnabas and Paul, when sent forth on their first missionary journey by the church of Antioch, were called apostles; and two members of the Roman Church, Andronicus and Junia, were "of note among the apostles."

267. Matthew or Levi, the son of Alpheus, was an inferior collector of taxes at Capernaum; and, judging from his employment, belonged to the lower ranks of society. He was first called to follow Christ from the receipt of custom in or near Capernaum, about a year after the commencement of our Lord's public ministry: perhaps, like Peter and John, he received a second call some months after. Before leaving his business and friends, he made a great feast in his house, at which his new Master, with many publicans and sinners, were present. He was chosen one of the twelve apostles shortly after, and was present at most of the remarkable events in Christ's subsequent ministry. No trustworthy account of his labours after the death of Jesus has reached our times; but it is supposed that he spent fifteen years in Jerusalem, and then travelled in Ethiopia and other countries, preaching to his countrymen. Heracleon, who flourished about A.D. 150, says, that he was one of those apostles who did not suffer martyrdom.

268. The publicans, of whom mention is often made in Scripture, were persons who paid a certain sum to the state for permission to collect the taxes or tolls from merchants, sailors, and others at the seaports or on the highways. In the Roman empire, these taxes were usually farmed by members of the

equestrian order, who sublet them to the publicans mentioned in the New Testament. The former were men of respectability and rank; the latter were hated by all classes for their extortion and injustice. Cicero describes the equestrian order as the ornament and strength of the empire; but their deputies were classed by the Jews with sinners and harlots, and by the heathen with unscrupulous pirates and avaricious chapmen. It is said that publicans of Jewish extraction were not allowed to enter the temple and synagogues, or give evidence in a court of justice. Their offerings were classed by the priests with the price of prostitution or blood, and therefore refused; in short, they were more than heathen in the eye of the law: "Let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." Zaccheus was "chief among the publicans," and appears to have been a man of great uprightness. The general character of the class was very bad; but history has recorded the names of some honest tax-gatherers.

269. The events and discourses contained in Matthew's Gospel are arranged according to subjects, not years. Instead of giving in chronological order the miracles, parables, sermons, and conversations of our Lord, he usually collects each of these under a separate head, without reference to time. Parts of discourses delivered at intervals of a year or two, may thus be found in the same chapter; and a number of miracles which were wrought at neither the same place nor the same time, are also set down together. It is not improbable, however, that our Lord sometimes repeated parts of a discourse at different times, and in different places. The plan of writing history adopted by Matthew, was common in ancient times, and was followed to some extent by Mark and Luke. Luke has arranged the events recorded in his Gospel with more regard to chronological order than Matthew; but John has paid more attention to the order of time than the other three evangelists.

270. Mark, known also by the Hebrew name of John, was the son of Mary, a citizen of Jerusalem, in whose house the disciples used to assemble. He was a nephew of Barnabas, and appears to have been introduced to Paul by that eminent

evangelist. When these two friends set out on a missionary journey through Asia Minor, Mark accompanied them as an assistant; but, on reaching Pamphylia, he was so disheartened by the difficulties and dangers they encountered, that he left Barnabas and Paul to pursue their travels alone, and returned to Jerusalem. Paul, greatly displeased with this proof of weakness, refused to take Mark along with him, when Barnabas afterwards proposed a second missionary tour. The two friends quarrelled about the matter, and took different roads: Mark accompanied Barnabas to Cyprus; Silas, Paul to Tarsus. The name of Mark does not again occur in history till near the end of Paul's ministry. He was then the friend and assistant of that apostle during his first imprisonment at Rome (61 A.D.), and shortly before the apostle's death (66 A.D.), received from him the commendation, "he is profitable to me for the ministry." Early writers are unanimous in relating, that Mark was the interpreter or secretary of Peter, and that his gospel is an abstract of the discourses delivered by that apostle. Perhaps he is the person alluded to in Peter's epistle, in the words, "Marcus my son." It is also said that he founded the church of Alexandria, and died there.

271. Luke, the friend and companion of Paul, is supposed from the form of his name to have been once a slave; and, from some parts of his writings, which show remarkable elegance in composition, a man of education. It may be inferred, therefore, that he is the same person whom Paul calls "Luke the beloved physician." The medical art was not popular among the Romans, and was seldom practised by free-born men. Families of rank educated one or two of their slaves for this profession, and sometimes rewarded their attention or success with freedom. It is supposed that the skill with which Luke describes the diseases healed by our Lord, shows an acquaintance with medical subjects, beyond the reach of all except professional men in those days. This evangelist first appears in history as one of Paul's attendants on the way to Macedonia; and he generally continued to reside with that apostle during the remainder of his

life. Perhaps his Gospel formed the substance of Paul's discourses on the life and teaching of the Redeemer; for he was not an eye-witness of the events it relates.

272. The brief account of the family of John, given in the Gospels, merely informs us that his father Zebedee, with the assistance of his children and some hired labourers, carried on the business of a fisherman in Galilee;[1] and that his mother, Salome, was one of the faithful women who supplied the wants of Jesus, and stood round his cross when others forsook him.[2] The families of John and Peter appear to have been partners, at least for a time, in trade;[3] and, as fish from the Sea of Galilee were perhaps reckoned delicacies in the southern parts of Palestine,[4] business may have led John to that acquaintance with Caiaphas and his servants which he claims in the Gospel. During his visits to Jerusalem and the neighbourhood, John heard of the Baptist's preaching; and, along with one at least of his friends, became his disciple.[5] But the Baptist only prepared his followers for the coming of a greater teacher than himself, and his most advanced disciples soon left him to follow Christ. John was among the number: he had learned all that the Baptist could teach, when, thirsting for further knowledge, a night spent with Jesus showed him how his desires might be gratified.[6] He was one of the chosen three honoured by our Lord with a closer view of His sufferings and glory; and even among these he stood nearest to Christ.[7] After the ascension of the Saviour, he continued generally to reside in Jerusalem, until about A.D. 60, when he withdrew to Ephesus, where he died, and where his tomb was long regarded as a sacred spot. It is probable that he composed his Gospel in the latter city; but the time when it was written is only matter of conjecture.

[1] Mark i. 20. [2] Mark xv. 40, 41; xvi. 1; Matt. xxvii 56. [3] Luke v. 10.

[4] The waters of the Lake of Gennesareth "are sweet and very agreeable for drinking. . . There are several kinds of fish in it, different both to the taste and to the sight from those elsewhere."—Joseph. *Wars*, iii. x. 7.

[5] John i. 35, 41. [6] John i. 40.

[7] Matt. xvii. 1-8; xxvi. 37; John xiii. 23; xxi. 20.

273. It has generally been thought that as John's life and writings breathe only the spirit of pure and intense love to Christ, this was the character of the apostle. Wherever real love exists, however, there is always joined to it a strong dislike of anything which opposes the object loved. This was the case with John. No one was so well fitted as he to penetrate into the depths of Christ's person and work, or to estimate the danger of rejecting his offers; and wherever he found the greatness of his Master overlooked or despised, his acute sense of the indignity made him feel proportionally indignant at the offenders. This is true of the latest notice regarding him, as well as of the earliest: he wished to inflict summary chastisement on the unbelieving Samaritans in the outset of his ministry, and his latest writings show the vehemence with which he spoke of Messiah's enemies, and foretold their final doom.[1]

274. On comparing the four Gospels with each other, it will be found that there are several things recorded by all, many related by John only, and a large number given sometimes with slight differences by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It is generally allowed that Matthew's Gospel was first written, and John's last; but opinions differ regarding the order of the other two. Since Matthew, Mark, and Luke contain many actions and discourses of Christ in common, while John differs in a great measure from them all, in the miracles, sermons, and conversations he narrates, it was not unreasonable to suppose that Mark and Luke had borrowed from Matthew, and that John had used none of the other three Gospels in composing his own. There is no reason to doubt the latter part of this supposition: John may have read these Gospels, but it is certain that he gives an independent account of the life and doings of Christ. He appears to have read the histories of Matthew, Mark, and Luke for the very purpose of omitting from his Gospel what they had already fully related. But it is not probable that Mark and Luke borrowed from Matthew, or from each other. Even when

[1] Luke ix. 54; Mark iii. 17; John xii. 6; Mark ix. 38; 3 John 9, 10; Rev. i. 7.

the same event is recorded by all three, the words which they use to express peculiarities of thought or action are often different: if they had borrowed from each other, they would have used the same words in these cases. Besides, the differences that exist between their account of the same event are so numerous and minute, that the idea of borrowing from Matthew or from each other must be at once set aside. The following is a striking instance of this want of agreement in relating the same event:—

Matt. xviii. 1, "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"—Mark ix. 33, "Being in the house, he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves who should be the greatest."—Luke ix. 46, "Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest."

It is now usually supposed, that Matthew, Mark, and Luke derived some assistance in writing their Gospels from the oral accounts of Christ's sayings and doings, handed down in the Church by the apostles and others, who attended him during his public ministry. There is as little ground, however, for entertaining this opinion as the former. We do not know, nor are we likely ever to discover, whether or not these evangelists were indebted to each other, or to friends, for portions of their Gospels; and, supposing that they were, it is really a matter of no consequence. The human agents employed in writing the Gospel histories, or in collecting materials for them, may be unknown: the fact is unquestionable that these histories were "given by inspiration of God."

275. The following Table shows the difficulty of determining when or where the Gospels were written:—

Gospel of	Written according to			Where Written.
	Owen.	Michaelis.	Lardner.	
Matthew,	A.D. 38	A.D. 61	A.D. 64.	Judea or Jerusalem.
Mark,	63	61	64.	Rome.
Luke,	53	63-4	63-4.	Greece, Alexandria, or Corinth.
John,	69	69	68.	Ephesus or Asia.

276. Many attempts have been made to arrange, in strictly chronological order, the events of our Lord's life recorded by the four evangelists; but it cannot be said that they have been attended with success. Although there is little difficulty in drawing up a table, which shall exhibit at one view all that the Gospel writers say on a given subject, it is a very different matter in general to determine the precise period of our Lord's public ministry to which any discourse or miracle should be referred. Matthew, Mark, and Luke give none but the vaguest dates in the interval between the temptation and the death of Christ; and they mention only one passover, although, as is known from John's Gospel, three if not four passovers occurred during his public ministry. The transfiguration happened, according to Matthew and Mark, "after six days;" and, according to Luke, "after eight days,"—a mode of reckoning which does not furnish sufficient grounds for tracing the history backwards or forwards from that point of agreement. Matthew connects the events recorded in his Gospel by such formulæ as, "after these things," "then," "at that time," "in those days," "the same day," and "after six days." Mark is even less precise; and Luke, though undertaking "to set in order" the events of Christ's life, gives only two numbers which can serve as a basis for a chronological arrangement,—the fifteenth year of Tiberius, and the age of Jesus when he entered on his public ministry. John appears to have paid more attention to dates than the other evangelists; but, even in his Gospel, the indefinite expression, "after these things," sometimes occurs. Generally, however, he carefully states how many days elapsed between successive events. If the apostle John had related several of the circumstances found in the other Gospels,—a chronological arrangement of our Lord's discourses and miracles would have been comparatively easy; but the feeding of the five thousand is perhaps the only event recorded by all the four evangelists between the temptation and the death of Christ. Points of contact between the known and the unknown are thus wanting, and a chronological arrangement must therefore be at least uncertain, if not impossible.

CHAPTER XIII.

INTRODUCTION TO OUR LORD'S PUBLIC MINISTRY.

	Matt.	Mark.	Luke.	John.
Preface to Luke's Gospel, . .			1. 1-4	
Vision of Zacharias—*Jerusalem*,			1. 5-25	
Vision of Mary—*Nazareth*, .			1. 26-38	
Visit of Mary to Elizabeth, .			1. 39-56	
Birth of John the Baptist, .			1. 57-80	
Vision of Joseph—*Nazareth*, .	1. 18-25			
Birth of Jesus—*Bethlehem*, .			2. 1-7	
Vision of the Shepherds—*Bethlehem*, ...			2. 8-20	
Circumcision of Jesus, and presentation in the temple, . .			2. 21-38	
The Magi—*Jerusalem, Bethlehem*	2. 1-12			
Flight into Egypt, &c., . . .	2. 13-23		2. 39-40	
Visit of Jesus to Jerusalem, .			2. 41-52	
The Genealogies, ...	1. 1-17		3. 23-38	
Ministry of John the Baptist—*the Desert; the Jordan*, .	3. 1-12	1. 1-8	3. 1-18	
Baptism of Jesus—*the Jordan*,	3. 13-17	1. 9-11	3. 21, 22	
Temptation—*Desert of Judea*,	4. 1-11	1. 12, 13	4. 1-13	
Preface to John's Gospel, . .				1. 1-18
Testimony of the Baptist to Jesus—*Bethabara*, ...	3. 11, 12	1. 7, 8	3. 16, 17	1. 19-34
Jesus calls Disciples, . . .				1. 35-51
Marriage at Cana, ...				2. 1-12

277. It appears from the table, that Luke has related with more fulness than the other evangelists the events of our Lord's life, previous to the beginning of his public ministry. Matthew has given only a brief account of his childhood; but Mark and John pass over the whole period without remark. Luke alone has narrated the events connected with the birth of the Baptist;

but the apostle John gives a more detailed account of his testimony to Jesus, than is found in the other Gospels.

278. The gospel history begins with the vision of Zacharias in the temple, and the promise of a son who should be born to him, notwithstanding his advanced age. About six months after, Mary, the betrothed of Joseph, was also favoured with a revelation from God. The angel Gabriel appeared to her in vision at Nazareth, and briefly intimated the honour with which she would be crowned, in becoming the virgin-mother of the long-expected Messiah. Her heavenly visitant dwelt less on this honour than on the dignity of the great Being to whom she should give birth; he intimated to her that his name would be Jesus; that he would be called, that is, be[1] the Son of the Highest, or the Son of God; and that he would reign for ever on the throne of David over the house of Jacob. Mary immediately repaired to the hill-country of Judea, where her relatives, Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth dwelt. She resided with them apparently till the birth of Elizabeth's son, John the Baptist, and then returned to Nazareth. A few months after, the Roman Emperor issued a decree, that the whole land of Judea should be enrolled, that is, every Jew was required to take the oath of allegiance to Rome, and have his name entered in the books of the Roman officers in the city to which he belonged. The enrolment took place at that time; but the tax to which it was preparatory was not demanded for many years. Joseph and Mary accordingly repaired to Bethlehem, then known as the "City of David," and Jesus was born there in the stable of the inn. Wise men from the East, attracted by a peculiar appearance in the heavens, and a company of shepherds who were feeding their flocks in the neighbourhood of the town, worshipped the illustrious infant. Herod, who was then king of Judea, sought to take away his life; but an angel warned Joseph to flee into Egypt with Jesus and Mary. The family remained there till the death of Herod, when they returned to Palestine and settled in Nazareth, the residence of Joseph before the en-

[1] Isa. ix. 6; so Luke i. 35.

rolment. When Jesus was about twelve years of age, he accompanied his family to observe the passover at Jerusalem, and astonished the learned men of the nation by the remarkable questions which he proposed. Scripture has left the next eighteen years of our Lord's life a blank, for it merely intimates that he "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

279. God had promised to David, and repeatedly intimated through the prophets, that Messiah should be born in his family. This was one of the marks for identifying Christ when he should appear, and it was therefore necessary to provide clear and convincing proof of his descent from David. Matthew and Luke have furnished the evidence required; but there are some difficulties connected with it which may be profitably examined. Luke traces the descent of Christ from Adam, proving that he was the Son of Man, "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh." Matthew begins with Abraham, to whom the promise was specially made, that Christ should be one of his descendants. The registers coincide only from Abraham to David; for, while Matthew traces the lineage of the Redeemer through Solomon, Luke traces it through Nathan, another son of David. The genealogies do not again coincide until they come to Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus. Salathiel and Zerubbabel are mentioned as father and son by both Matthew and Luke in this interval; but there is little reason to doubt that, though the names are the same, the families were different. It is usually assumed, in explanation of this want of agreement between the two genealogies, that Matthew gives the descent of Joseph from David, Luke the descent of Mary. Various reasons are assigned for this supposition. It is evident that the pedigree of Joseph is given by Matthew, for it begins with Abraham, who begat Isaac, and ends with Jacob, who begat Joseph, the husband of Mary. There are good reasons also for believing that Mary belonged to the ancient royal family of Judah. The angel Gabriel promised that her virgin-born son should sit on "the throne of his father David." The Jewish writers call her the daughter of Heli;

and early Christian authors speak of her as the daughter of Joakim—a name often interchanged with Eliakim, or by contraction Eli.

280. As both genealogies end with Joseph, there are two points requiring examination; *first*, why the genealogy of Joseph is given at all, for it was sufficient to show that Mary belonged to the family of David; and *second*, why Joseph is called the son of Heli (Luke) when his real father was Jacob (Matthew). The simplest way of explaining the former is by supposing, in accordance with Jewish notions, that the lineage of Mary ceased to be reckoned through her own father after her marriage with Joseph: she then became a member of his family, and was entitled to all the rights and privileges which its members enjoyed.[1] It is equally easy to explain why the evangelist says, "Jesus being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, the son of Heli . . . the son of Adam, the son of God." When a Hebrew made an extract of this kind from his family registers, he did not put the same meaning upon the phrase "son of" as our translators. The latter have taken the liberty of reading the register thus:—"Jesus, the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli," &c., adding "which was," to make it clear that they considered Joseph the son of Heli, Heli the son of Matthat, Adam the son of God. This is not only contrary to Hebrew practice, but it leads to absurdity. Thus, "Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon, Esau's wife;"[2] but, since Anah was a man, the words "the daughter" must be referred to Aholibamah, although our translators would have made Anah the daughter of Zibeon. In reading the genealogy of our Lord, Hebrews would have understood it thus:—Jesus the son of Joseph; Jesus the son of Heli; Jesus the son of Matthat; . . . Jesus the son of Adam; Jesus the son of God. There is no difficulty therefore in explaining why Luke adds, "as was supposed," after Joseph. People imagined that Joseph was the real father of Jesus; not so, the evangelist says, but Heli was one of his ancestors. In the same way the

[1] Num. xxxvi. 23.

[2] Gen. xxxvi. 14.

expression "son of God" is applicable to Jesus only, and not to Adam at all.

281. It is also objected against these genealogies that several names are omitted, and one or two are wrong. Thus Matthew leaves out Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah, kings of Judah; Pedaiah, the son of Salathiel and father of Zerubbabel, and Jehoiakim the son of Josiah: and it is also evident, that the number of names between Judah and David is far too small for the space of time that elapsed. But it was usual in making extracts from family registers, to pass over several names, whether for the sake of brevity, or to suit the convenience of the transcriber: the original could be consulted at any moment, and only the leading names were quoted. It is not so easy to explain why Luke makes Arphaxad the father of Cainan, and Cainan the father of Salah, when the Hebrew text calls Arphaxad the father of Salah.[1] The Septuagint version falls into the same mistake, and Luke may have quoted from it; or, what is more probable, some transcriber at a very early period foisted the word Cainan from that version into Luke's Gospel.

282. The taxing of which Luke speaks in the beginning of his Gospel, has given rise to much discussion. It is agreed that the word "taxing" is a mistranslation for "enrolment;" and as the enrolment of citizens among the Romans,—that is, returns of their birthplace, age, and property, preceded the actual levying of the poll-tax, it is not improbable that these returns were called for in Judea at the birth of Christ, although the tax itself was not exacted for a number of years after. Profane history is not altogether silent on the subject. Cæsar Augustus threatened to treat Herod, king of Judea, as a subject, and not as an independent prince, on account of an invasion of Arabia, which he made without the Emperor's permission. Cyrenius, a Roman senator, seems accordingly to have been sent to exact an oath of fidelity to the Imperial Government from all the inhabitants of Palestine; and, to simplify the business, each was commanded to repair to his own city. But matters did not pro-

[1] Gen. x. 24; xi. 12.

ceed further than the enrolment, for Herod succeeded in regaining the friendship of Augustus. After Herod's death, Cyrenius was again sent as president of Syria to complete the work, and the tax was then levied. This is perhaps the best way of explaining what is thought a serious difficulty. Profane historians inform us that Cyrenius was governor of Syria ten years after Herod's death; Luke seems to say that the *enrolment itself* was then completed. But the silence of historians, in a matter relating to the small and distant province of Judea, is not sufficient to disprove the account of Luke. They do not deny his statement, and he is surely as worthy of credit as any of them: he received his information from persons who had probably been enrolled and paid the tax themselves; and it is very unlikely that the decree which appointed this work, would be forgotten, or confounded with another.

283. One of the marks for identifying Messiah, when he should appear, was descent from David; another was the fulfilment of prophecy in his person. Matthew gives greater prominence to the latter than any of the other evangelists; and even the birth and infancy of Jesus furnished him with examples. The first that he mentions is Isaiah's prediction of the virgin-birth and exalted nature of Messiah, Immanuel, God with us: the next, Micah's prophecy, that Bethlehem should be his birthplace. Even Joseph's flight into Egypt was necessary for the due fulfilment of ancient prophecy: "Out of Egypt have I called my son." But all the instances given by Matthew are not so easily explained as these. That evangelist says, "He came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." No prediction, in these words, is found in the Old Testament; the town of Nazareth, from which the term Nazarene is taken, is not even named by sacred writers till the time of Christ: but it appears that Nazareth was situated in a district proverbial for the rude manners and harsh speech of its inhabitants; and, it is not improbable that Nazarene came in course of time to denote a mean, despised person. Several ex-

amples of nicknames, derived from towns, are found in Scripture: to call a Jew a Samaritan, was to charge him with want of piety towards God, of respect for his ancestors, and of love to his country; Galilean was an opprobrious term implying a rude and ignorant man; and Nazareth may have been remarkable among the cities of Galilee for these bad qualities. But it had been predicted that Messiah would be despised by the people, a root out of a dry ground, a worm, and no man. Nazarene seems to have comprehended all these epithets, and was perhaps a brief mode of expressing the substance of a number of prophecies bearing on the humiliation of Christ.

284. The miraculous events connected with the birth of Jesus and of John the Baptist created a great sensation at the time. The vision vouchsafed to Zacharias was a proof to all the people that God had again visited the nation; the circumstances attending the birth of John made the inhabitants of the district in which his parents dwelt, expect that he would be a distinguished servant of the Most High: and this belief was greatly strengthened by an appearance of angels to some shepherds in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, when Jesus was born. Simeon, a man universally considered a prophet of God, and Anna, a prophetess, whom a residence for many years in or near the temple had raised to great credit with the nation, recognised in Jesus the long-promised Messiah; and openly proclaimed his appearance and office. Perhaps these public testimonies to the Messiahship of Jesus were confined to the middle and lower ranks of society; for it is singular that "all Jerusalem was troubled," only when the wise men of the East arrived to do honour to the recently born king of Judea. But we must suppose, that a year or two had then elapsed since the birth of Jesus; and the excitement, originally produced by the numerous testimonies to his exalted dignity, was only revived by the inquiries of the wise men. The learned class in Jerusalem could not be ignorant of the events that had taken place: Zacharias was a priest, and therefore a man of rank; Simeon and Anna were distinguished for piety, and well-known frequenters of the temple courts. It

is thus difficult to imagine, that the chief priests and most honourable men of the nation were not aware of the circumstances attending the birth of Jesus and of John; but they showed no acquaintance with them when Herod inquired where Christ should be born. Probably they feared the jealous nature of the tyrant, if he got the young child into his power, and confined themselves to merely answering the question which he proposed. It should not be overlooked, however, that undeniable public proof of the Messiahship of Jesus was given at this time. Zacharias, Simeon, and Anna, all of whom were persons of note in Jerusalem; the natives of the hill country of Judea, and the shepherds of Bethlehem; the king, the Sanhedrim, and all Jerusalem knew by infallible signs that Christ had come, or had actually seen the child, and conversed with its mother. The excitement at first caused by this accumulation of evidence appears to have died away, before our Lord entered on his public ministry, unless it was revived to some extent by the wisdom which he displayed, when, though only twelve years of age, he disputed with the learned men in the temple.

285. The introduction to John's Gospel, extending from the first to the eighteenth verse of the first chapter, is remarkable for the short but most important account of the person and work of Christ which it contains. No attempt is made to prove the weighty statements of these verses, for the book was addressed to believers, who received without questioning what the inspired writer said regarding his Master. The apostle, writing under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, first describes the person of Christ (i. 1-5.) With a manifest allusion to the beginning of all things mentioned in the Old Testament (*beginning*, *darkness*, Gen. i. 1, 2; John i. 5), he declares that Christ was even then in being, with God, yea, God himself. It is not said that the Word ever began to exist; and the apostle does not, like the other evangelists, treat of the birth and early life of the man Christ Jesus. From the Divine nature of the Word, John passes to his work of creation: Christ is the maker, upholder, and proprietor of all things, among which men are specially mentioned

(ver. 11). In determining the person of Christ, it is usual to ascend to his Godhead from the attributes and works ascribed to him: John, on the other hand, descends from the former to the latter. But our Lord is something more than the maker of all: he is also the source of the highest life and the purest light to men. It is not meant that he makes them living beings, for that is part of his work as Creator, and has been already mentioned by the apostle; but he furnishes them with spiritual life, and enlightens them with heavenly truth, from his own exhaustless fulness. His glory is thus displayed, *first* in forming the body and in supplying its wants, and *next* in giving life and nourishment to the soul. The power which he wields is not delegated: he works by his own right, for "in him is life, and the life is the light of men." Our Lord is called "the Word" by the apostle John, and this term has given rise to controversy. It is supposed by one able writer that as Christ is often called "him that should come," so John, wishing to describe him as the "promised one," but using the noun instead of the participle, calls him "the Promise," or "the Word." This, however, is far-fetched, and is unsupported by analogy. John is describing the agent whom the Father employed in making known his will to men; "he spoke to us by his Son." He also calls Christ the maker of all things, and it is said in Scripture, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made;" and throughout this Gospel, Jesus represents himself as the Father's messenger, the speaker of his words, and the revealer of his purposes. There is a manifest fitness, therefore, in the name here bestowed upon the Saviour; for as speech or words make known the thoughts of the soul, so Christ publishes to men the secrets of the Godhead.

286. Leaving the consideration of his person, the apostle next describes the work which he undertook, and the reception he met with on earth in discharging it (i. 5-14). As the material world lay dark and formless when the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters, so the spiritual world was covered with darkness when Christ appeared. Spiritual as well as natural light supposes an eye that can see; but men's

minds are not able to discern spiritual things, and hence the light of Christ is said to have shone in darkness. One part of the work undertaken by the Word, therefore, was to give light to men: Christ is "the light of men." When the morning star rises in the east, it is plain that the sun is not far below the horizon; the former is both a herald and a witness to the speedy approach of the latter. It was the same with the Sun of Righteousness. He, too, had his forerunner in John; and though Messiah's coming seemed as unlikely in those days as at any former period, the Baptist both testified that he would soon appear, and prepared men for the rising of his glorious light. John had no light in himself: the few rays that he scattered were entirely borrowed from Christ, and therefore a distinction is carefully drawn between the morning star of redemption and the Sun, between the herald of gospel-day and its King. The light of the morning star is partial and feeble, and such was that of John: the light of the sun is universal and strong, and such was that of Christ: "That was the true light, which, on coming into the world, lighteth all mankind." John's teaching was limited to a narrow circle of followers; that of Christ was designed to embrace the whole family of man.

287. The sun is the source of life as well as light, and in like manner the Saviour brought both into the world. The apostle, therefore, proceeds to view him further as the source of spiritual life, as the giver of that new birth which all believers undergo. Men are blind and dead to spiritual things, without eyes to see their beauty, and without strength to lay hold on them; and when Christ appeared in the world, or, as the apostle says, "came to the house" which he himself made, its inhabitants, whether Jews or Gentiles, refused to acknowledge their Master. An entire change must take place in the heart of man before he can recognise Christ. It is called a new birth, a passage from death to life, a new creation, a new heart; for then only is man able to see the beauty, and to do the will of Christ, who alone is pronounced the author of this great change. Those who are born again, by believing on Christ, are also

gifted with the right of becoming "sons of God." Jews called God their Father, and deemed this honour peculiar to their nation; but the Word appeared, and gave the right of sonship to all believers of whatever nation, and in a sense immeasurably superior to any notions entertained by the Jews. Such, then, was the work undertaken by the Word in appearing on earth; and it is worthy of observation, that the apostle, in describing this work, has connected it entirely with the Godhead of the Word: as yet, nothing has been said of his humanity.

288. There are two terms employed by the apostle John in these verses, and throughout his Gospel, which it is proper to explain, *world* and *life*. The former is employed to denote—

(1.) Creation generally. (2.) The world of mankind. (3.) Unbelievers; and (4.) Believers.

There is nothing remarkable in the fact, that the word has these four meanings in this book.[1] In the first place, mankind, or the company of unbelievers, and that of the saints, form part of the world, and not unfrequently the whole is put for a part; hence the first two meanings of the word. But, further, unbelievers have their portion and enjoyment in this life only; most truly, therefore, are they called *the world*. The affairs of kingdoms and men, again, are all regulated for the good of God's people, and the advancement of his Church; believers are the salt of the earth, without whom it could not exist: with all propriety, therefore, does the apostle term them *the world*, for they are its best part. The other expression requiring explanation is "*life*," *everlasting life*. When the bodily members cease to discharge the functions for which they were made, they are said to be dead; and, in like manner, the soul, which cannot fulfil the ends of its existence by loving and obeying God, is reckoned dead. Christ came to free the soul of man from this death in sin, by so changing its state, that instead of standing aloof from

[1] Compare our own use of the word *nature*. (1.) We speak of all nature rejoicing, meaning, by that, the whole world, animate and inanimate. (2.) But it is also common to say, such conduct is abhorrent to nature, where the universal sentiment of humanity is intended. (3.) Further, the word is restricted to the condition of unbelievers, for we speak of sinners as being in a state of nature.

its Maker, it seeks fellowship with him; instead of delighting in breaking his law, it strives to keep it in the smallest matters; and, instead of looking within itself for hope and joy, it seeks them, where alone they can be found, in God. This new life is called everlasting, for, though begun on earth and in the body, it shall go on to full perfection in heaven, where many things that now hinder its growth shall have passed away. The author of this life in the soul is sometimes said to be God, at other times Christ, and this can only be explained by maintaining that "these two are one."

289. Although the apostle has described the work of Christ, he has not yet told his readers how God the Word manifested himself among men; but the fourteenth verse removes the difficulty; clothed with grace and truth, the Word became flesh, lived among men in the tabernacle of the body, like one of themselves, and displayed to their minds and eyes his glorious power. He was not a spirit, for they saw him; not like ordinary men, for he was surrounded with the Father's glory, and filled with grace and truth; and not a mere man, for he became flesh, and tabernacled among us, as a stranger erects his tent in a foreign land. Certainly there is no meaning in words, if the apostle does not represent the Word, first as God, next as Creator, then as the Source of Truth, and lastly as taking upon him the nature and likeness of man. In him was "glory, *as* of the only begotten of the Father," that is, such as might have been looked for in this messenger from God. The glory spoken of refers to Christ as the source of light: he scattered light and glory around him.

290. At length the time approached for the entrance of Jesus upon his public ministry; but all the evangelists begin with the preaching and testimony of his forerunner, John. As the Baptist was a priest, it might have been expected that he would be a constant resident in the temple; but "he was in the desert until the time of his showing to Israel." A rough garment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle, though the usual dress of prophets, called attention to the fact that John was sent

"in the spirit and power of Elias" to announce the coming of Christ. Leaving his retreat in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, he removed to the country round about Jordan, and preached confession of sins, repentance and amendment; proclaiming at the same time to the crowds who followed him, that the long-expected kingdom of heaven was at hand. Great numbers of all ranks were baptized by this desert prophet in the Jordan; some attached themselves to him as their master, and assisted him in his work. Scribes and Pharisees, common people, publicans, and mercenary soldiers, who were probably in the pay of Herod, asked direction, and promised reformation. The crowds, who heard the Baptist's preaching, returned to their towns and villages impressed with the belief that he was a great prophet, if not the Messiah himself: Jews from foreign lands carried a knowledge of his teaching to different parts of the world, where it continued to spread long after his death; for there are traces of John's disciples in Antioch of Pisidia, Alexandria, and Ephesus, twenty years after this time.[1] But the Baptist did not permit people to entertain the opinion that he was the Messiah. He told them of "a mightier one" than he, who had not yet appeared; whose baptism should be with the Holy Ghost, not with water; and who should separate the chaff from the wheat among men. Jesus was residing in Nazareth when John entered on his ministry; not long after, he visited the scene of the Baptist's labours, and insisted on receiving baptism. John knew from his parents that Mary's son was greater than he, and unwillingly consented; but he confessed afterwards that he had at the best a very inadequate idea of the dignity of Jesus.[2] Light suddenly broke upon his mind, as his newly baptized follower stood on the bank, engaged in prayer. He at once recognised in Jesus the Lamb of God, the bearer of a world's sins, the baptizer with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and the Son of God. About two months after, a deputation from the Sanhedrim examined John on his

[1] Acts xiii. 24, 25; xviii. 24, 25; xix. 1-3.

[2] In this way the apparently conflicting statements in Matthew iii. 13-17, and John i. 29-34 are reconciled.

work and claims. He allowed their right to interfere ; but while denying that he himself was Messiah, Elias returned from heaven, or an ancient prophet risen from the dead, he declared that one in the crowd of onlookers was the promised Saviour. This was the last public testimony to the Messiahship of Jesus, before he entered on his ministry, and it brought his claims again directly under the notice of the Sanhedrim.

291. Jesus spent the interval between his baptism and the arrival of this deputation, in meditation on the great work he had undertaken, and in conflicts with the enemy of mankind. For forty days and forty nights he was in the wilderness, fasting and with the wild beasts ; and during that time he was exposed to the subtlest assaults of Satan, in circumstances most favourable to the Evil One. There seems no reason to doubt that Satan knew the person and office of Jesus ; and the boldness with which he tempted the Saviour to evil, furnishes a striking example of his arrogance and pride. The first temptation was an apparently reasonable appeal to the keen sense of hunger, felt by our Lord after a lengthened fast : " If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." As Jesus was " driven by the Spirit into the wilderness," and detained there by the same power, he knew that the Father, who had sent him on this journey, would also provide him with food, if necessary. Hence his reply to the suggestion of Satan, " It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Obedience to God's command was his life, and want of bread could not suggest to him doubts of his Divine commission. To repulse the first onset of Satan secures victory ; all his subsequent attacks are weaker. It was so in the temptation of our Lord. The attempt of Satan to work unbelief in the second Adam, as he had done in the first, failed at once ; and the other temptations with which he assailed Christ, have a greater resemblance to the efforts of unreasoning despair, than to the well-weighed plans of deliberate cunning. He felt himself vanquished when his first attack was repulsed, and, in despair, he exerted power more than cunning in those

which followed. Readers of the gospel history are certainly surprised by the ease with which Satan transported our Lord from the desert to the top of the temple-porch, or summoned up in a moment the pride and panoply of empire before his mind; but they can see little wisdom in the temptations then practised, especially after the first had been overcome.

292. The first display of Christ's glory recorded in Scripture after his triumph over Satan, was in calling his disciples. John and Andrew were followers of the Baptist, but left that teacher when he proclaimed the glory and greatness of Jesus. They spent a day with their new Master, according to the account given in the Gospel of John, and his conversation deepened the belief which the Baptist's words had awakened: "We have found the Christ." Andrew then brought his brother Simon to Messiah, from whom he received the new name Cephas, the Syriac, or Peter, the Greek word for a stone. These disciples do not appear to have remained with Jesus at this time; for, according to the other evangelists, James, John, Peter, and Andrew, were afterwards finally called in Galilee. Perhaps they had gone before him from the banks of the Jordan, where these events took place, to Galilee, their native province; and when following their business as fishermen, they received the final and powerful call which made them "fishers of men."

293. While on the road to that district, Christ summoned Philip of Bethsaida to be his disciple. We are not informed by what means our Lord manifested his authority to Philip; but from the eagerness with which that apostle spoke of Jesus as "him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write," it may be inferred that the prophecies of Scripture were appealed to with irresistible power. To the doubts of his friend Nathanael respecting the person of Christ, Philip could only say, "Come and judge for yourself;" if the testimony of the Baptist, whom all pious men reckoned a prophet, and the clear statements of Scripture could not convince Nathanael, a single conversation with Jesus would sweep away every doubt. Nor was Philip mistaken. Christ alluded to some unseen struggle or inward

joy, experienced by Nathanael under a fig-tree, and Nazareth, from which that Israelite thought nothing good could come, was forgotten: the conviction was forced upon his mind that he, who saw what Nathanael knew no mortal eye could have beheld, must be the King of Israel, or, as John's disciples had learned to call him, the Son of God. Nathanael belonged to Cana in Galilee, and is mentioned again in the Gospel after the resurrection of Christ; but beyond attachment to our Lord, and sincere belief in his Messiahship, we know nothing with certainty regarding him. Some suppose that he was the same person with Bartholomew, but of that we have no certain knowledge.

294. The next display of our Lord's glory was the miracle at Cana of Galilee, whither our Lord repaired after leaving Judea. Jesus and Mary were invited to a marriage-feast in that town, and the disciples of Christ accompanied him. Many of them lived in the neighbourhood, and may have been relatives or acquaintances of the married persons, but we are not informed. The mother of our Lord, knowing from her own experience what he could do, told him that the company wanted wine, expecting that he would then provide it. "My hour," he said to her, as he afterwards said to his brethren, "is not yet come." The ordinary rules that regulate human conduct might suffice for her or for them in their dealings with men, but he had a work to discharge, to which everything else was subordinate. Mary, in her kindness of heart, wished him to work a miracle; but she forgot the difference between her position and his. The season for doing the Father's will was fixed in heaven, and could not be put forward or backward one hour to please man: she was urging him to a course of conduct which, so far as her knowledge went, might be inconsistent with the purpose of God. Mary, knowing that her request would be granted, for it was not refused, told the servants to do whatever Jesus bade them, and a supply of wine was soon borne to the ruler of the feast.

295. There is a remarkable circumstance connected with this, the first recorded miracle of Christ, which requires to be ex-

amined. Every miracle that he wrought had a spiritual aim: the healing of the body only prepared the way for the healing, or, it might be, the death of the soul; and the spiritual end of a miracle should always be looked for. It is expressly said in the present case, that Christ displayed his glory, and confirmed the faith of his disciples; and the reason of working the miracle appears to have been the following. Old Testament prophets were men of a loving but severe character; the solemnity of their work, and the evil times in which they laboured, did not usually permit them to share in the common joys of life. Deserts, not marriage-feasts, were their resort; sackcloth, not the nuptial dress, their clothing; threatenings of vengeance, or mourning over sin, not supplying men with wine, their employment. John also was distinguished by these peculiarities, and had gained the respect of the people, as well as of the disciples of Christ. But our Lord came with glad tidings, and acted in the spirit of his message: he came to free man from bondage to sin and ceremonies; and his whole life was an example of this freedom. The apostles might be astonished at the contrast between him and Elijah or John, both in going to this feast and in furnishing the guests with wine; but the display of Divine power that he made must have silenced every doubt. The Baptist had done nothing like it; and if the freedom of the Saviour surprised the disciples, his glorious power would confirm their faith, and put their wavering to shame.

We have seen already the difficulties which beset the attempts of critics to arrange the four Gospels in strictly chronological order; and that a knowledge of the exact date of every miracle, discourse, and journey of Jesus is now unattainable. It is desirable, however, to adopt some method in reviewing the events of our Lord's life; and as Professor Robinson's *Harmony* is perhaps as near an approach to accuracy as can be expected, we shall, in general, arrange the Gospels according to the plan of that work.

CHAPTER XIV.

FIRST YEAR OF OUR LORD'S PUBLIC MINISTRY.

	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
Jesus drives the traders out of the temple at the Passover, and works miracles, ...				2. 13 25
Our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus, ...				3. 1-21
Jesus makes disciples in Judea; testimonies of John the Baptist and John the Apostle, .				3. 22-36
Imprisonment of John; Jesus goes to Galilee, ...	4. 12 14. 3-5	1. 14 6. 17-20	4. 14 3. 19-20	4. 1-3
Visit of Jesus to Sychar—*i.e.*, Shechem, ...				4. 4-42
Jesus teaches in Galilee; and when in Cana heals a nobleman's son at Capernaum, . .	4. 17	1. 14, 15	4. 14, 15	4. 43-54
Jesus is rejected at Nazareth, and dwells in Capernaum, . .	4. 13-16		4. 16-31	
Final call of Peter, Andrew, James, and John—*near Capernaum*, ...	4. 18-22	1. 16-20	5. 1-11	
Healing of a demoniac in the synagogue; of Peter's wife's mother, and many others—*Capernaum*, ...	8. 14-17	1. 21-34	4. 31-41	
Jesus travels throughout Galilee,	4. 23-25	1. 35-39	4. 42-44	
Healing of a leper—*Galilee*, . .	8. 2-4	1. 40-45	5. 12-16	
Healing of a paralytic man—*Capernaum*, ...	9. 2-8	2. 1-12	5. 17-26	
Call of Matthew—*Capernaum*, .	9. 9	2. 13, 14	5. 27, 28	

296. After leaving Cana, Jesus spent a few days in Capernaum with his mother and his disciples; but, as the Passover

was approaching, he went up to Jerusalem. On entering the temple, according to the account given in the Gospel of John, he found the outer court, known as the Court of the Gentiles, thronged with sellers and buyers of animals for sacrifice or the feast, and with changers of money. Christ, showing the zeal which had been predicted of him,[1] cleared the court of these intruders, by the invincible power and majesty with which he was always surrounded. Unquestionably his zeal enlisted the sympathies of the common people, who were very jealous of the sanctity of the temple, and many of whom, according to John's Gospel, believed on him when they saw the miracles which he wrought. They would applaud his conduct, if they did not lend him their active assistance. But, irrespective of this, the words and looks of Jesus were enough to show the worldlings, that they were in presence of the Master of the Temple. The Jews, or rather the Pharisees,[2] did not relish the idea of being outdone in zeal for the honour of God's house by any one; and, to excuse their worldliness, they demanded a miracle from Christ in proof of his right to interfere. "Destroy this temple," our Lord said, "and in three days I will raise it up." As the same word meant "temple" and "house," the first part of his answer may as well stand "destroy this house." These Jews bore our Lord no good will; they often threatened his life afterwards, and at last took it away: they had heard of him already, though not to their satisfaction, and they now saw what he could do. It is far from improbable, then, that the rulers had already formed the design of putting him to death. He was perfectly aware of their purpose, though his disciples were not; he does not expressly say, 'Kill me as you intend,' but he uses a form of expression of which their consciences would readily suggest to them the meaning. "House" or "temple" is repeatedly used in Scripture to denote *the body*.[3] The Pharisees knew this use of the word quite well; and when our Lord said, "Destroy this house,"

[1] Ps. lxix. 9; Isa. lvi. 7; Jer. vii. 11.

[2] "The Jews" has this meaning in John's Gospel, ix. 15, 18.

[3] Job iv. 19; Eccl. xii. 3; 1 Cor. vi. 19; 2 Cor. v. 1, 2; vi. 16.

as you wish or intend, he showed them that he had read the secret wish or design of their hearts. Christ thus intimated to these Jews his knowledge of their purposes, but whether intentionally or not, some of them understood him to refer to the temple. His glory was thus seen in his zeal for the Father's honour, in his reading men's secret thoughts, and in the clear prediction he uttered of his own resurrection.

297. The miracles which our Lord wrought in Jerusalem at this feast were so astonishing, that many of the people acknowledged his Messiahship; but as he knew that no confidence could be placed in their professions of faith, "he did not commit himself unto them." There was one exception to this rule in Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, and a member of the Sanhedrim. Though a man who loved the truth, he was afraid to avow his convictions, for, in the interview which he had with Jesus at this time, he came to him by night. But men of a timid disposition are often bolder in the hour of danger than their forward or resolute companions. When the Sanhedrim was bent on putting Jesus to death, Nicodemus alone defended him from the charges of impiety and imposture; and, when the boldest of Christ's followers were in hiding through fear of the rulers, Nicodemus was one of the faithful few who took down his body from the cross, and laid it in the grave.[1] Our Lord left Jerusalem shortly after his interview with this disciple, and continued for some time baptizing in the land of Judea. The Baptist was preaching in the neighbourhood, and his disciples were displeased at the preference given by every one to the teaching of Jesus, whom their master had baptized and honoured before the people. A dispute, which arose between them and the Jews on this subject,[2] induced them to bring their complaints before John. He immediately silenced their murmurs, assuring them that it was most just in him to decrease while the Messiah increased in honour. To the testimony thus borne by the Baptist to the dignity of Jesus, the apostle John has added his own testimony, or rather the substance of several discourses which

[1] John vii. 50; xix. 39.

[2] John iii. 25.

he heard delivered by our Lord. Jesus was the witness of heavenly truth, "all men coming to him" in the opinion of John's disciples, but in reality "no man receiving his testimony;" he was the Sent of God; he received the Spirit without measure, and is the giver of everlasting life.

298. Scarcely have readers of the gospel perused these testimonies of the Baptist and the apostle, than they find Jesus in circumstances which might well stagger their faith. Though ruler of all things, and possessed of the Father's love, he journeyed on foot to Galilee, through the province of Samaria; he was exhausted with the journey; he was overcome by the mid-day heat; and at length weary, thirsty, and hungry, he gladly sought rest beside Jacob's well, waiting until the disciples should procure food.[1] He was on the road to Galilee, fleeing from, or at least avoiding the Pharisees, who hated his teaching, and were only prevented by fear of the people from putting him to death. The words with which the third chapter of the Gospel of John closes are still sounding in our ears; we have not forgotten that Jesus is the Son and messenger of God, the Lord of all, and equal in honour with the Father; yet he required refreshment like an ordinary man, and was apparently unable to procure even a draught of water.[2] "Who hath believed our report?" exclaimed Isaiah, when he compared the inward greatness of Messiah with the lowliness of his outward presence; it is the same here: a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, a weary traveller, a thirsty and hungry wanderer to the eye of sense; "God manifest in the flesh" to that of faith.

299. A woman, belonging to the neighbouring village of Sychar or rather Shechem, for it was only about half a mile dis-

[1] As it wanted four months to harvest (John iv. 35), this journey was most likely made about December, for the barley in Palestine is ripe about April. Even in midwinter, however, the sun in that country is sometimes very strong; "the heat is awful, and the sun seems to us to be more tyrannical than he has a right to be, considering it is the 8th of December."—De Saulcy's *Dead Sea*.

[2] "Dec. 14.—The heat is excessive, and at times we stop to slake our thirst with water, when we are lucky enough to fall in with a spring."—De Saulcy.

tant, came to the well for water. Our Lord entered into conversation with her: she treated him lightly at first; she called him merely a Jew, and, as with all nations that hate each other, this was said in contempt; it was not becoming in him to ask, nor in her to give, even a drink of water. Soon her manner changed; his words and looks bespoke the presence of no ordinary person; she said respectfully, *Sir* (Lord); she was doubtful, too, whether he were not greater than the great Jacob himself. But she wavered again, either in doubt or in anger, at "call thy husband;" "I am unmarried," was her snappish reply to this testing request, until the knowledge which he displayed of her life scattered doubt, and sorrow, and anger, and once more her address was most respectful, "Sir, I perceive thou art a prophet." Nothing is better fitted to bring out the truth-like character of the whole story than these changes in the woman's mode of address, answering as they do to the changes which must have taken place in her feelings towards Christ.

300. The water of Jacob's well was merely the text on which Jesus founded his discourse, the parched country and the fainting traveller contrasting strongly with the changed appearance of nature and man, produced by fresh or living water. He asked a draught from the well, and offered to repay it with one from the fountain of life; he sought a temporary relief to his wearied body, and promised in return ceaseless refreshment to her thirsty soul; Jesus brought the gift of God, the woman was proud of the gift of man. This comparison of the richest blessings to a well of water is both appropriate and frequent. One great charm of our Lord's discourse on this, as well as on many other occasions, lay in the text on which it was delivered, for in general he lodged truth in the minds of his hearers by passing from the material to the spiritual. Was he preaching in the open air, with the lilies blooming around him, or the sower scattering grain over the neighbouring fields? He made these the texts of powerful and telling sermons on the kingdom of God. Christ opened the eyes of a blind man, and then preached of himself as the light of the world; he fed thousands with a

few loaves, and then proclaimed himself the bread of life; in like manner, from the draught of water which he sought of this woman, he took occasion to discourse on the enlightening and strengthening virtues of gospel truth. A little fresh water opens the eyes of a wearied traveller on a hot day; it strengthens, it enlightens, it cheers him, when almost ready to faint: so also, as soon as the soul drinks of the fountain which Christ has opened, weariness burdens it no longer, and joys formerly unknown are felt. The parched tongue, refreshed with cool water, is a meet emblem of the parched soul relieved by the blessings of gospel truth.

301. As soon as the woman discovered that Christ was a prophet, she sought a solution of the question so much agitated between her own people and the Jews, Should men worship the true God on Mount Gerizim, or on Zion? Religion holds the first place in man's mind, and the removal of doubts or fears regarding God is the chief object of existence; the sudden turn thus given to the conversation, is therefore another truth-like feature of the narrative. Perhaps, also, the woman naturally wished to escape from speaking further about her private affairs, on which it was neither creditable nor pleasant to dwell. In reply to her question, Jesus pointedly stated that her people knew not the proper way and place of worshipping God, while the Jews knew both; but he announced also the speedy approach, or rather the very presence of that time, when outward worship should cease, and worship in spirit and in truth overspread the earth.[1] "In spirit:" for the outward services of the Mosaic law, the presentation of one's body before the holy place at the yearly feasts, the sacrifices, and the sacred persons, places, and things, would soon be exchanged for that inward worship of the heart which outward ceremonies only typified. "In truth:" because the age of types and shadows was fast passing away;

[1] John iv. 22 has caused commentators much trouble, probably from their not observing that, when fully expressed, the sentence would run thus:—"Ye worship (on a mountain) which ye know not (to be forbidden of God): we worship (on a mountain) which we know (to be chosen of God).

they were fulfilled in the person of Messiah, the truth or substance to which they referred. The *truth*, therefore, of which our Lord spoke was himself: "I am the way, the truth, and the life." The revealer of truth thus called himself Truth; and, in like manner, Christ, the giver of salvation, when addressing this woman, called himself Salvation—"Salvation is of the Jews." Samaritans would thus find a Gerizim, and Jews a Zion, in Jesus. What can be imagined more sublime than this weary traveller teaching a poor and misguided woman truths so simple, that even she could feel their power, but so high that the strongest and sharpest minds of antiquity groped after them in vain?

302. The woman did not altogether allow the correctness of Christ's answer to her question; it might be right, but her nation was not flattered, and she put off a final settlement of the dispute until the coming of Messiah. Jesus then assured her that he was the Christ, in plainer language than he was accustomed to use, when speaking of himself to his ordinary followers, or to the rulers of the Jews. In the meantime the disciples returned from the village, and were surprised to find their Master talking with a Samaritan woman, especially with one whose appearance probably betokened want of respectability. It was long before the apostles understood their Master's character: at one time they freely expressed astonishment at his singular actions; at another they were filled with admiration of his works and wisdom; in some places they worshipped him; in others, they took the liberty of condemning his conduct; in writing his life, they have carefully recorded their doubts, their fears, their foolishness, their progress, their displeasure, and their love; and what better security could one wish that they have recorded the truth? His address to the disciples is remarkable for the declaration, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Thirst, hunger, weariness, all were forgotten, when souls were to be saved, lost sheep restored to the fold of the good Shepherd. He bade them lift up their eyes, and behold the welcome sight of the Samaritans streaming from

the village to see and talk with Messiah ; by gathering a people from among them he would finish part of the work which brought him to earth.

303. As everything on earth scatters the light of day, so believers reflect around them the light of truth, which they borrow from Christ. The woman, on discovering the true character of Jesus, repaired to Sychar, and invited the townsmen to welcome Messiah. He stayed two days in their village, instructing them in the things of the kingdom, and proving by word and deed the truth of his claims. Sychar is not mentioned again in the gospel history ; doubtless it was one of the many villages of the Samaritans, in which Peter and John afterwards preached the gospel.

304. The news of Christ's arrival in Galilee soon spread from town to town of that country. Many of the inhabitants had witnessed the miracles which he wrought in Jerusalem eight months before, and were rejoiced to hear that he had come to teach and heal in their cities. One man in particular showed his faith in Jesus. He is called " a nobleman " in our version ; but the word used in the original implies that he was a courtier, who probably held some office about the palace of Herod. When informed that Jesus had reached Cana, he left Capernaum, where his son was lying sick, and urged him to come and heal the child. Jesus declined to accompany him, but assured him that his son was alive and well. The father believed Christ's word ; and, on consulting the servants, found that his son began to recover at the very time Jesus said, " Thy son liveth."

305. Our Lord next visited Nazareth, from which he had been absent a considerable time : the evangelist Luke has related what took place on that occasion. It was usual in the synagogues to give any person, who seemed competent for the duty, an opportunity of reading a portion of Scripture, and addressing the congregation. Our Lord took advantage of this custom on the Sabbath : standing up in the attitude of reverence usual among the Jews, he read a few verses from Isaiah ; then, handing the roll to the servant or keeper of the sacred books,

he sat down, as teachers were accustomed to do, and proclaimed himself the promised Messiah. Every eye was fixed upon the speaker in amazement; but he was not allowed to proceed. His hearers began to ask one another, "Is not this Joseph's son?" as if the greatness of his claims made them doubt the evidence of their senses. Reproaches, taken from his humble condition in life, appear to have been heaped upon him; for the people acted on the principle of the proverb, "Physcian, heal thyself." "Thou," they seemed to say, "who claimest to be the Messiah, and who promisest us the blessings foretold in our sacred books, exert thy power in first raising thyself to honour from the humble station of a carpenter's son." Jesus warned them, by examples from the history of Elijah and Elisha, that unbelief had always prevented the Hebrews from enjoying the blessings of the covenant; but his address only inflamed their rage, and, though it was the Sabbath-day, a seditious mob attempted to take away his life.

306. Jesus then withdrew to Capernaum, where he was well received by the inhabitants, and where he continued to reside for a considerable time. The people manifested great anxiety to hear his teaching, or see his miracles, for the cure of the nobleman's son was well known in the town: multitudes followed him to the sea-shore, where there were both water to baptize, and ample space to accommodate an audience. Early in the morning, on one of these occasions, he preached out of the fishing-boat of Peter; and, after dismissing the people, gave him, Andrew, James, and John that effectual call which made them forsake their friends and become followers of Christ. On the following Sabbath, apparently, Jesus taught the people of Capernaum in the synagogue, and proved the truth of his teaching by expelling an unclean spirit from one of the congregation. The person on whom this miracle was wrought called him "Jesus of Nazareth, the holy one of God;" for evil spirits, though unable to attain to purity themselves, are conscious of its existence and power in others. On leaving the synagogue, Jesus, accompanied by James and John, went to the house of

Peter, and healed his mother-in-law of a fever. The whole city was moved by the miracles and teaching of Christ: at sunset, when the Sabbath ended, the door of Peter's house was besieged by crowds of people, bringing sick and infirm persons to be cured of their diseases. The Redeemer left the town next morning before daybreak, and withdrew to a solitary place, where he might, without interruption, engage in prayer. But the excitement still continued in Capernaum; the people thronged the door of Peter's house, and that disciple conducted them to the place of our Lord's retreat. Instead of returning with them as they requested, Jesus, accompanied by his disciples, proceeded to visit other cities in Galilee, where he taught the people, and performed many miracles. Multitudes flocked to hear him from all parts of Palestine; the evangelist Matthew relates that they came from Syria, Galilee, and Decapolis, Jerusalem, and Judea. No house or synagogue was large enough to hold the crowds that followed Christ; and when some miracle, more astounding than others, revived the excitement among the population, he required to meet with them in waste places, or on the mountain sides.

307. At length he returned to Capernaum, and lodged in Peter's house. A number of Scribes and Pharisees, drawn to that town by the reports concerning Jesus, immediately assembled to hear his preaching. The house was soon filled, and a crowd stood round the door: suddenly, a bed was let down through the tiling of the roof by some men, who could not get admission at the door: the man who occupied it was sick of the palsy; and Jesus, seeing his faith, immediately forgave his sins. The Pharisees, recognising in this an assumption of the attributes of Deity, imagined that our Lord was guilty of blasphemy: but he followed up the words which offended them by laying bare their secret thoughts, and healing the man of his distemper. If these learned Hebrews had been as ready to obey the law as they were to quote it, they would have at once acknowledged Jesus as Messiah. Moses laid down two rules for distinguishing true from false prophets; if a man

taught what was agreeable to the law of God, all were bound to receive him as a prophet; but if he tried to withdraw men from the worship of Jehovah, the rulers were commanded to put him to death. Should any doubt arise on this point, another rule was applied; the man who predicted in the name of Jehovah what did not happen, was a false prophet; but the man whose prophecies were fulfilled, was a messenger from God.[1] Now, Jesus wrought miracles and enforced the law; the conditions laid down in the Old Testament, for distinguishing a true prophet, were thus fulfilled, and he should have been at once accepted as such by the nation. The only other event recorded in the gospel history during our Lord's stay at Capernaum, is the call of Matthew or Levi: the feast, at which he entertained Jesus and the disciples, was perhaps celebrated a few months after.

[1] Deut. xviii. 22.

CHAPTER XV.

SECOND YEAR OF OUR LORD'S PUBLIC MINISTRY.

	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
Bethesda: healing of the infirm man—*Jerusalem*, ...				5. 1-47
The disciples pluck ears of corn on the Sabbath, ...	12. 1-8	2. 23-28	6. 1-5	
Healing of the withered hand on the Sabbath—*Galilee*, . .	12. 9-14	3. 1-6	6. 6-11	
Multitudes follow Jesus—*Sea of Tiberias*, ...	12. 15-21	3. 7-12		
Jesus withdraws to a mountain: choosing of the twelve —*near Capernaum*, . . .	10. 2-4	3. 13-19	6. 12-19	
Sermon on the Mount—*near Capernaum*, ...	5. 1–8. 1		6. 20-49	
Healing of centurion's servant —*Capernaum*, ...	8. 5-13		7. 1-10	
Raising of the widow's son—*Nain*, ...			7. 11-17	
John the Baptist sends disciples to Jesus—*Galilee*, . .	11. 2-19		7. 18-35	
Reflections of Jesus on appealing to his miracles—*Capernaum*, ...	11. 20-30			
Jesus is anointed by a woman in a Pharisee's house—*Capernaum*, ...			7. 36-50	
Second journey of Jesus through Galilee, ...			8. 1-3.	
Healing of a demoniac: blasphemy of Pharisees, . . .	12. 22-37	3. 19-30	11. 14, 15, 17-23	
Scribes and Pharisees seek a sign—*Galilee*, ...	12. 38-45		11. 16, 24-36.	

	Matt.	Mark.	Luke.	John.
True relatives of Christ—*Galilee*,	12. 46-50	3. 31-35	8. 19-21	
Jesus denounces woes against the Pharisees—*Galilee*,			11. 37-54	
Discourse on providence and watchfulness—*Galilee*,			12. 1-59	
Slaughter of certain Galileans: parable of the barren fig-tree —*Galilee*,			13. 1-9	
Parable of the sower—*near Capernaum*,	13. 1-23	4. 1-25	8. 4-18	
Parable of the tares; other parables—*near Capernaum*,	13. 24-53	4. 26-34		
Stilling of the tempest—*Sea of Galilee*,	8. 18-27	4. 35-41	8. 22-25	
Healing of two demoniacs—*Gadara*,	8. 28-9. 1	5. 1-21	8. 26-40	
Discourse on fasting at Levi's feast—*Capernaum*,	9. 10-17	2. 15-22	5. 29-39	
Raising of Jairus's daughter: woman with issue of blood—*Capernaum*,	9. 18-26	5. 22-43	8. 41-56	
Two blind men healed, &c.,	9. 27-34			
Jesus is again rejected at Nazareth,	13. 54-58	6. 1-6		
Third journey of Jesus through Galilee: commission of the twelve,	9. 35-11. 1	6. 6-13	9. 1-6	
Herod believes Jesus to be John the Baptist,	14. 1, 2, 6-12	6. 14-16, 21-29	9. 7-9	
Return of the twelve: Jesus retires across the lake. Feeding of five thousand,	14. 13-21	6. 30-44	9. 10-17	6. 1-14
Jesus walks upon the water,	14. 22-36	6. 45-56		6. 15-21
Discourse on the true manna: Peter's profession of faith—*Capernaum*,				6. 22-71

308. After the call of Matthew, our Lord left Galilee to be present at a feast in Jerusalem. It has been much disputed what feast this was: critics are divided in opinion between the feast of Purim, the Passover, and Pentecost; but it was probably one of the two last, though there are not sufficient grounds for determining which. If events happened in the order prefixed to this chapter, we must suppose that the Passover is meant, for "the second Sabbath after the first," is mentioned as the date of the next event in Christ's public ministry. That expression should perhaps rather be, "the first Sabbath after the second day of the Passover," for the Jews began to count the seven Sabbaths, that intervened between the Passover and Pentecost, from the second day of the former. Three Passovers are expressly mentioned by the apostle John,[1] so that the duration of our Lord's public ministry must have been at least about two years and a half; if this feast was also a Passover, or the Pentecost after a second Passover, not mentioned in the gospel history, Christ's public ministry must have extended over three years and a half.

309. On the Sabbath-day after his arrival in Jerusalem, Jesus visited a spring near the sheep-gate, called Bethesda, and celebrated for its healing virtues; a range of porches had been built round it, where multitudes of sick and diseased persons lay "waiting for the moving of the water." From the maimed and diseased in this hospital, our Lord selected one whose sins had brought on him a disease of thirty-eight years' standing,[2] and whose hopes of recovery appear to have been very slight;[3] he healed him, bade him carry off his bed, and disappeared in the crowd before the man could ascertain who he was. Certain well-known Jews,[4] in whom, from other parts of the Gospel of John, it is easy to discover the Pharisees and members of the Sanhedrim, met the man in the streets, glad to leave his prison-house, though apparently without house to shelter or friends to welcome him, and reproved him for breaking the Sabbath; they demanded also the name of the person who healed him. Doubt-

[1] John ii. 23; vi. 4; xiii. i.
[2] John v. 14, compare viii. 11.
[3] John v. 7, 16.
[4] *The* Jews, John v. 15.

less they knew this well, and only wished to identify Jesus, that they might ruin him with the people, or accuse him before the Sanhedrim. The Saviour soon put himself in the man's way, and warned him of danger—"Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee;" but in vain, for he "left Jesus and told the Jews" the name of his benefactor. The language implies that this was done with an evil design; if he had wished, as is generally supposed, to commend our Lord to the Jews in thus giving them his name, we may be certain, from the lengthened account of the blind man which follows, in chapter ix. of the same Gospel, that this would have been mentioned to his credit.

310. This miracle, and the designs of the Jews, led to one of the clearest and fullest discourses of our Lord on his own person.[1] The Jews came to Jesus, probably in the temple, and charged him with breaking the Sabbath; no messenger from heaven would have done so, they argued, and Jesus, therefore, could not be a teacher come from God, as the people generally believed. He did not clear himself by using the common-sense argument, with which he silenced them in other places; but he rested on his right to do as he pleased with his own—the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath, and equal with God; he came to free man from the bondage of tradition and ceremony, and his own life was an example of that freedom. "My Father worketh until now, and I work," was his reply. He represented the Father as having given him a work to do, and as carrying it on with him. The rulers charged him with going against the will of God in healing the man; but, conscious of his oneness in will and purpose with the Father, he said, "In everything I have done hitherto, my Father wrought also; and, since his power enabled me to work the miracles, you are wrong in supposing that I have broken his commandments, or lost his favour now." The Pharisees called God their Father;[2] but they saw that the sense, in which Jesus used the word, was very different from what they had been accustomed to. He appeared to them making himself Son of God naturally, or in essence, not in a figure as

[1] John v. 17-30. [2] Deut. xiv. 1.

they did; they did not understand the sonship as a title of office, but as a birthright claimed by Jesus; therefore they sought to kill him. If the whole that passed on the occasion had been handed down, this would have been quite plain; John has given us only the text and heads of the discourse, but these are so important that it is desirable to bear them in mind.

The equality between the Father and the Son is presented by Jesus to his hearers under different aspects. *First*, It is an equality in power and working: "The Son *can* do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father do;" he doeth all things that the Father doeth, and he doeth also the same things as the Father, universal and identical in power with God; their wills and works *cannot* be different, although the Jews affirmed this. *Second*, It is also an equality in knowledge and purpose—"the Father showeth him all things that himself doeth;" the restoring of health to the weak was one of these things, but Jesus would yet be shown greater, that "men might marvel," where to *show* plainly embraces also the power of doing. *Third*, It is an equality in quickening dead souls; the Father raises them up, and the Son quickens whom he will, where the present tense implies that the quickening is going on, and the expression *whom he will* shows that the general resurrection of the dead is not referred to. This is one of the greater works spoken of by Christ; this is the new birth of his interview with Nicodemus. *Fourth*, It is consequently an equality in judgment: "He that believeth not," or rejects the Son's quickening influence, "is condemned and judged already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God."—(John iii. 18.) *Fifth*, It is an equality in honour. This is the design of the whole; men must honour the Son equally with the Father. The quickening of the soul and escape from judgment are followed by corresponding effects upon the body, and Christ proclaims himself the source of all life to men. *Sixth*, This equality, then, is one of self-existence: the Son has life in himself as the Father has. *Seventh*, He affirms, further, that this equality extends to calling the dead from their graves, and judging the whole world, according to the good or evil deeds of men. Equality with God was so plainly claimed as his right by Jesus, that even the carnal-minded Pharisees understood him; and if the reading of our Lord's own words does not prove to a person the necessity of either admitting the Godhead of Christ, or setting him down as an impostor, it is not likely that any arguments will carry conviction to his mind. The works which he professes to do, and the attributes he claims, are those of God only; the intimate knowledge that he has of the Father's purposes, the mutual delight subsisting between the Father and the Son, their equality in worship and self-existence, and the oneness of their wills, can be explained only on the supposition of at least two "persons in the Godhead, equal in power and glory."

When claims so momentous and extraordinary as these are advanced by one in the likeness of man, it is reasonable to inquire what proofs he brings forward of their truth. Our Lord allows the necessity of proof, and, in accordance with the principles of Jewish law, he produces two witnesses, both of whom were held in the highest esteem among the Jews—God the Father, and Scripture.—(John v. 36-47.) From the address that follows it appears that Jesus was not now speaking to the Pharisees only, if at all, but to the multitudes who crowded round him: "Ye were delighted with John's preaching," he said, which was true of the people, but not of the rulers. Knowing, then, how highly John was respected as a teacher by the multitude, an appeal to him might have been expected from the Saviour. Eminent though he was, however, Jesus sets his testimony aside; he has nobler and better witnesses to produce. God sealed the truth of Christ's words, (1.) by the works which he enabled him to perform; this was the first and the outward part of the Father's testimony; on this account, also, the apostle John has given instances, not numerous, but select, of Christ's miraculous powers. (2.) The voice from heaven,[1] when the people could not distinguish the words, and saw no bodily form, as our Lord reminds them, was another part of the testimony borne by the Father to which Jesus appeals. But (3.) the voice that speaks within man's heart, the word that abides there, is the third and great testimony of the Father to the truth of Christ. It seizes the citadel of man's inner being, and witnesses with a power that nothing can withstand. The second witness brought forward by Jesus was the Scriptures, with which the Jews were familiar. "Ye search them," he says; "ye do well: ye look for eternal life there, and they bear witness of Messiah, as the only giver of it." With such testimonies as these in his favour, most truly does our Lord say, "I receive not honour from men."

311. Our Lord then withdrew to Galilee, where the same question of breaking the Sabbath was again raised by the Pharisees. When walking through the fields one Sabbath, he permitted his disciples to satisfy their hunger by plucking the ears of corn, and rubbing out the grain with their hands. The Pharisees who were with them called his attention to this supposed breach of the law; but, instead of condemning, he justified the conduct of his disciples. He first quoted the case of David, who used the shew-bread to satisfy his necessities, although the law allowed none but priests to eat it; and he then pointed to the fact, that the priests broke the strict letter of the law every

[1] Matt. iii. 16, 17; so John xii. 28; v. 37; i. 32, 33.

Sabbath by kindling wood on the altar, lighting candles, cleaning the vessels used in the temple, and other necessary works. The principle on which our Lord justified the conduct of David was, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice," that is, the observance of duties naturally binding on all men in preference to the precepts of ceremonial worship. But he also put the question in another light: "In this place is a greater than the temple, the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath." Viewing himself as standing in the same relation to the Sabbath, that a king does to his country or a lord to his estate, he assured the Pharisees that he would preserve its sanctity from violation, and maintain every fence, which had been raised round it by the piety of former generations. He claimed for himself the right of determining what was holy or unholy, what should and what should not be done on the Sabbath, thus asserting in the clearest terms his equality with Jehovah, by whom the Sabbath law was given to the Hebrews. On this declaration of our Lord are founded the observance of the first, instead of the seventh day among Christians, with the repeal of those ceremonies, which rendered the Sabbath a burden more than a delight to the Jews. Shortly after, the same charge was again brought against Jesus: he restored the withered arm of an unfortunate man in the synagogue one Sabbath, although the Pharisees and Herodians, as the political party who favoured the views of Herod was called, were on the watch for an accusation against him. He anticipated their murmurings by asking, "with anger,"[1] whether it were right to do good on the Sabbath; and then illustrated his question from the practice of every humane man to save the life of his beast on the day of rest, by lifting it out of a pit into which it might have fallen. But no arguments could satisfy these men: filled with madness, "they held a council how they might destroy him."

312. Jesus then withdrew to a mountain in the neighbourhood of Capernaum, where he chose the twelve, and delivered the Sermon on the Mount. After spending the whole night in

[1] Eph iv. 26.

prayer, he called his disciples in the morning, and set apart twelve of them for special work, honouring them at the same time with the name of Apostles (Luke). They were ordained to be with him, and to go forth preaching the gospel, healing diseases, and casting out devils (Mark). Lists of the members of this chosen band are given by Matthew, Mark, and Luke; John only mentions them incidentally as the "twelve," assuming apparently that his readers were familiar with the other Gospels.[1] The lists are as follow :—

Matthew.	Mark.	I. Luke.	Acts of Apostles.
Simon or Peter, and Andrew;	Simon or Peter;	Simon or Peter and Andrew;	Peter and James, and John and Andrew.
James and John.	James and John (Boanerges), Andrew.	James and John.	
		II.	
Philip and Bartholomew;	Philip and Bartholomew;	Philip and Bartholomew;	Philip and Thomas;
Thomas and Matthew.	Matthew and Thomas.	Matthew and Thomas	Bartholomew and Matthew.
		III.	
James, son of Alphæus, and Lebbeus or Thaddeus;	James, son of Alphæus, and Thaddeus;	James, son of Alphæus, and Simon Zelotes.	James, son of Alphæus, and Simon Zelotes.
Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot.	Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot.	Judas, son of James, and Judas Iscariot.	Judas, son of James.

The first thing deserving of notice about these lists is the fact that the twelve appear to have been divided into three classes, each containing four. The members of the first class occupy a more prominent place in the gospel history than those of the other two; the members of the second than those of the third; and Matthew seems to indicate a difference in nearness to Christ among the apostles, when he calls Peter "the first." Another point of importance is, that the names generally occur in pairs, two disciples having gone forth in company to preach the kingdom among men. By comparing the lists, it will be found that

[1] John vi. 67.

Matthew has most likely given the order in which the apostles were arranged by our Lord himself. The names of several among the apostles have given rise to discussion. Bartholomew means either son of Tolmai, *i.e.*, Ptolemy, a Greek word, or son of Talmai, a Hebrew name.[1] As he is associated in three of the four lists with Philip, who, according to John's Gospel, brought Nathanael to Jesus,[2] it has been inferred that Bartholomew and Nathanael were different names for the same person. Thomas is the Hebrew, and Didymus, the other name of this apostle, the Greek for *a twin*. Andrew means vowed to Jehovah; Matthew the gift of Jehovah; Lebbæus (= brave), Thaddæus (perhaps = Theudas, from a word meaning *breast*), and Judas, were three names of the same apostle. Judas is called the brother instead of the son of James in our version; but the translators were probably misled, by supposing that the apostle Jude wrote the Epistle of Jude.[3] Another of the apostles besides Peter was called Simon; he is supposed, from his surname Zelotes, to have belonged at one time to a fanatical party among the Jews, which followed Judas of Galilee (Acts v. 37) in refusing to pay tribute to the Romans (about 10 A.D.), when Judea was reduced to a Roman province. But it is more probable that Simon, like Peter and the sons of Zebedee, derived his surname from some event connected with his discipleship. He is also called the Canaanite, or rather the Cananite, not that he was of heathen extraction, but because Cananite is Hebrew for the Greek Zelotes. It is supposed that Simon, Judas, and James the Less,[4] were sons of Mary, the sister or cousin of the Virgin, and of Cleophas or Alphæus.[5] The last of the twelve is Judas Iscariot (= man of Kerioth, Josh. xv. 25), whose character is summed up in the words, "Who also betrayed him."

The sermon on the mount immediately followed the appointment of the twelve: the subject on which our Lord discoursed was *the law and the prophets*. His enemies had repeatedly charged him during the past year with breaking the law, and he took this opportunity of defending himself before

[1] Josh. xv. 14. [2] John i. 46. [3] Jude 1.
[4] Mark xv. 40. [5] Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3.

the people. Moses commanded the Sabbath-breaker to be put to death, and the prophets traced the misfortunes of the nation, in past ages, to disregard of the day and year of rest; the Pharisees taught that it was wrong to heal the sick or cure the disabled on the Sabbath, and that Jesus, who did both, respected neither Moses nor the prophets. The sermon has special reference to these charges. Matthew, by whom it is most fully reported, says that our Lord, "after being set," addressed the multitude from a mountain; but Luke represents him standing "on a level place:" probably he preached from an elevated knoll in a plain on the mountain side. But while our Lord vindicated himself from the charge of breaking the law in word or deed, he also unfolded the nature and blessings of the kingdom of heaven. The sermon on the mount is to the Christian Church, what the giving of the law was to ancient Israel,—a guide to holy living more than a rule of faith.

In the introduction, our Lord contrasts the blessings of believers with the sorrows of worldlings. The blessings which he promises are expressly mentioned by the prophets or borrowed from Old Testament ideas; whatever was spiritual under the former economy belongs also to the gospel; whatever was carnal may be applied to illustrate spiritual truth.—Matt. v. 1-12; Luke vi. 20-26.

Jesus pronounces those who suffer persecution for the gospel, blessed among men; their reward is in heaven, and they are of equal rank with the prophets in the kingdom of God. But even on earth they enjoy high honours; for (1.) they are the salt of the earth, and therefore bound to maintain a consistent walk among men: (2.) they are the light of the world, observed by all around them, and therefore bound to glorify God by their good works.—Matt. v. 13-16.

But believers are also the representatives of the prophets, and heirs of the obligations not less than the blessings of the law; they must observe all, even the least of the commandments, with more strictness than the scribes and Pharisees themselves. Our Lord selects some examples, to show the people what he meant by this strong statement.—Matt. v. 17-20.

(1.) In those days the Council of Seven (judgment) which sat in every city, was a court inferior to the Sanhedrim. Under the gospel, causeless anger with a brother, whether a relative or a fellow-believer, will, as it were, be brought before this court. But further, whosoever shall call his brother Raca (worthless) shall be cited before the Sanhedrim; and the opprobrious epithet, "thou fool," may incur the punishment of hell-fire. Unjustifiable anger can no more escape punishment than murder; and reconciliation with the offended person should be sought immediately, lest punishment overtake the criminal.—Matt. v. 21-26.

(2.) The seventh commandment receives an equally wide interpretation: the sin of adultery may be committed by the eye, precisely as the sin of murder may be committed by the tongue. Divorces on slight grounds are

pronounced unlawful, and marriages with women so divorced, though very frequent in Jerusalem, and allowed by the Sanhedrim, are counted adultery by our Lord.—Matt. v. 27-32.

(3.) False witnessing, a sin repeatedly condemned by the prophets, is next taken by Jesus to illustrate his respect for the law. Scribes and Pharisees swore by the gift upon the altar, by the temple and other holy places; but our Lord forbade his followers to swear at all. Every transaction with them was to be settled by a solemn *yes* or *no;* every member of the Church was bound to speak as he thought and felt, without the constraining influence of an oath. But this prohibition of an oath does not extend to the wicked world; it applies only to the Church of Christ, and worldly matters must be regulated by a different standard. Hence oaths ought not to be exacted from persons examined in church courts; but they are administered to witnesses in courts of law. Our Lord even lays down the general rule for the guidance of his followers: "Resist not evil," but suffer smiting and robbery without complaint.—Matt. v. 33-37.

Our Lord then proceeds to show by other examples that the righteousness of the Pharisees was not sufficient to satisfy the demands of the kingdom of heaven. While their maxim was, "Love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy," he required every one to love his enemies, that is, "to do good to all men as he had opportunity." Ostentatious almsgiving was both approved and practised by these hypocrites, as Christ indignantly styled them, but the laws of his kingdom enjoined men to do their alms in secret, not letting their left hand know what the right was doing. The Pharisees cloaked their evil designs under long prayers, and sought credit with the people by selecting the synagogues and the corners of streets for engaging in devotion; but the followers of Christ were commanded to offer up their prayers in the closet, where God alone could hear their requests. In fasting also there was the widest difference between the two classes of men: the Pharisees disfigured their faces, while their hearts were untouched; the people of Christ engaged as usual in their ordinary occupations, but humbled themselves in spirit before God. The object of these ostentatious acts of piety, on the part of the Pharisees, was to amass riches by plundering the fatherless, and devouring widows' houses; the object of Christ, in laying down rules of an opposite character, was to turn the attention of his followers to the necessity of securing for the soul a place in the kingdom of heaven. Worldly wealth might be gained by the former; the imperishable treasures of heaven would be the prize of the latter.—Matt. v. 38–vi. 34; Luke vi. 27-36.

Our Lord concludes his sermon by giving several practical directions to his followers. He exhorts them to avoid censoriousness, to forgive their enemies, to ask of God what they needed, believing that they would receive it, and to act towards others as they would wish others to act towards them: these injunctions contain the substance of all that is taught in the law and

the prophets. In a few concluding words of great force and beauty, the Saviour sketches the characters of those who accept, and of those who reject his offers; the former enter in at the strait gate, and *find* it only by diligent search; the latter crowd the broad road, and merely *go in* at the wide gate of destruction: the one resembles the good tree, with its good fruits; the other the corrupt tree, with its evil fruits: and believers are like the man who built his house upon a rock; worldlings like him who raised it on sand in the bed of a winter torrent.—Matt. vii.; Luke vi. 37-49.

313. On coming down from the mountain, Jesus entered into Capernaum, and was met by a deputation of Jews, whom a centurion in the city had sent with the request, that the Saviour would restore his dying servant to health. Matthew says that the centurion made the request himself, but it is usual to speak of a person doing that himself, which he authorizes another to do. This officer seems to have been a proselyte, and was held in great esteem by the Jews. He believed that Christ could heal his servant without seeing or touching him, by giving orders to the spiritual powers over which he ruled; and he felt also—in singular contrast to the worthiness mentioned by the deputation—that it would be too great an act of condescension in a being so exalted as Jesus to enter his house. Faith and humility seldom shone more brightly among the most devoted friends of the Redeemer. On the following day he went to the neighbouring city of Nain, accompanied by many of his followers and a large crowd of people. As they approached the gate, a funeral procession came out,—a weeping widow was following the dead body of her only son to the grave. Christ, filled with compassion, bade her weep not, and then, addressing to the dead man the simple command *arise*, presented him alive to his mother. All present were afraid, and seem to have shown their terror by running from the bier, or by other outward acts; and the rumour spread throughout Galilee and the neighbouring country of Judea, that a great prophet had arisen in the land. The disciples of John the Baptist, who was then in prison at Machærus, carried these rumours to their master, and two of them were commissioned by him to inquire of Jesus, whether he were the Messiah or not. It seems as if John's faith had failed,

as if, in fact, he could not understand how a great prophet could be raising the dead or healing the sick, and would not open the prison-doors of a prophet of God. Freedom to the prisoner was one part of Messiah's work, but John seems to have stumbled at our Lord's apparent neglect of a prophet of God, compared with his readiness to heal the sick, or raise the dead among the humblest ranks of the community. Hence we can understand why Jesus said with reference to this deputation, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." Our Lord, instead of giving a direct answer to the question of the two disciples, wrought many miracles while they were present, and bade them carry back to John an account of what they saw and heard.

314. The next incident mentioned in the life of our Lord took place apparently at Capernaum: while he was at meat in a Pharisee's house, an unhappy woman entered the apartment and anointed his feet as he reclined at table. A similar incident took place in Bethany towards the close of Christ's public ministry, with which this is sometimes confounded. There is reason to believe, that this repetition of the same act was not unusual in the life of our Lord. Thus we find that he was twice rejected, in nearly the same circumstances, by the people of Nazareth; that twice he stilled a tempest by night on the sea of Tiberias; that twice he cleansed the temple, once in the beginning, and again at the end of his public ministry; that he was twice requested to give the Pharisees a sign of his Divine commission; and that twice the disciples professed their faith in Jesus as the Messiah of God. It is reasonable to infer from these examples, that several of our Lord's discourses, proverbs, or sayings, may have been also repeated at various times, though in slightly different words; and this will explain why the evangelists sometimes represent the Saviour uttering nearly the same words in places far apart.

315. Setting out again from Capernaum, our Lord made another circuit in Galilee, attended on this occasion not only by his disciples, but also by several pious women who supplied his wants out of their own abundance. The names of one or two do

not afterwards occur in Scripture; but it is evident, from the manner in which Luke mentions them, that they were well known among believers in his days. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, Salome, Susanna, and Joanna the wife of Herod's steward, belonged to this devoted band, and probably ministered to Christ from this time till his death. Crowds of people, attracted by curiosity or love, also accompanied the Saviour, and even Scribes and Pharisees came from Jerusalem to oppose his teaching. Although the common people, astonished at his authority over evil spirits, were ready to acknowledge him as the Son of David, these learned men accused him of leaguing with Satan[1] to deceive the nation by an appearance of miraculous power. This malicious charge, though only "idle words," drew down upon its authors a severe rebuke. Jesus the Holy One of God, and anointed with the Holy Ghost, can never be in league with the unholy powers of darkness: the man who harbours that idea trenches on a sin which shall not be forgiven, blaspheming against the Holy Ghost. With singular inconsistency, the same party, not long after, asked our Lord to prove his Divine commission by drawing down fire from heaven, or by performing some other miracle. Jesus compared them to a man, who, after being delivered from the power of an evil spirit, again becomes subject to its influence, when every unholy feeling exercises tenfold, or, according to the Jewish mode of speaking, sevenfold power over his conduct. He refused to give them such a sign as they wished, but promised that as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, the Son of man should be the same time in the heart of the earth. As our Lord was buried before sunset on Friday evening, and rose early on Sunday morning, it seems at first singular that Scripture should represent him as having lain three days and three nights in the grave; but at other times the Saviour spoke of rising "on the third day," or "after three days," where parts of a day are evidently put for whole days, according to a form of speech common in all countries. The

[1] Beelzebub, probably a contemptuous name (lord of dung) for a Philistine idol.

malice of enemies was not the heaviest sorrow which Christ had to bear; for, while censuring the wickedness of the learned class in the nation, his mother and brethren were endeavouring to force their way through the crowd, probably with the intention of taking him home, because they believed him beside himself (Mark iii. 21).

316. While our Lord was addressing the crowd which surrounded him on this occasion, one of the Pharisees, according to the Gospel of Luke, requested him to dine at his house. The invitation was not given in token of respect for Jesus, or of belief in his Divine commission, but, as the event showed, with the intention of entrapping him into statements, which might furnish ground for a charge of impiety or heresy. The host expressed great surprise when his guest sat down to meat without first pouring water over his hands. Jesus replied with a just severity, which showed that he was not ignorant of the designs of the party that had been assembled for the occasion; the conversation became general, and at last the Scribes and Pharisees provoked him to speak of many things, laying wait for him in his talk. A discourse, which he delivered to the people immediately after, referred to this scene at table; for Jesus warned his hearers (1.) To beware of hypocrisy, which he called the leaven or ruling principle of the Pharisees; and (2.) Not to fear men who can kill the body, but have no power over the soul. He also enforced on his hearers the watchful providence of God over all his creatures, the certainty that persecutions will befall believers, and the necessity of every one being on his guard lest temptation should surprise him at unawares.

317. It seems to have been about this time that our Lord delivered many of the parables contained in the gospel history. He told his disciples that he had two reasons for adopting this style of discourse: first, to illustrate to the common people the doctrines of the gospel; and second, to conceal them from the proud Pharisees, who probably thought these stories unworthy of their attention. All the parables of Christ relate to the kingdom of heaven, and may be arranged under the following heads:—

I. Value of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The lost sheep,	Matt. xviii. 12 ; Luke xv. 4.
The lost drachm,	Luke xv. 8-10.
The hidden treasure,	Matt. xiii. 44.
The pearl,	Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

II. Requisites of the Kingdom.

1. Counting the cost.

The tower,	Luke xiv. 28-30.
The warring king,	Luke xiv. 31-33.

2. Producing fruit.

The talents,	Matt. xxv. 14-30 ; Luke xix. 12-27.
The barren fig-tree,	Luke xiii. 6.
The labourers,	Matt. xx. 1-16.

3. Importunate prayer.

The widow,	Luke xviii. 1.
The friend,	Luke xi. 5-10.

4. Union to Christ.

The vine,	John xv. 1.

III. Contrast of the Kingdom with the World.

1. In their treatment of the Word.

The sower,	Matt. xiii. 3; Mark iv. 3 ; Luke viii.
The vine-dressers,	Matt. xxi. 33-41.

2. In their intercourse without agreement.

The tares,	Matt. xiii. 24.
The net full of fishes,	Matt. xiii. 47.
The rich man and Lazarus,	Luke xvi. 19.

3. In outward righteousness.

The prodigal son,	Luke xv. 11-32.
The two sons,	Matt. xxi. 28.
The marriage feast,	Matt. xxii. 1-14; Luke xiv. 16-24.

4. In humility.

Chief places at feasts,	Luke xiv. 7-11.
The Pharisee and Publican,	Luke xviii. 9-14.

5. In good works.

The good Samaritan,	Luke x. 25-37.

The unforgiving servant,	Matt. xviii. 23; Luke vii. 41.
The unjust steward,	Luke xvi. 1-13.
The ten virgins,	Matt. xxv. 1-13.

IV. The Growth of the Kingdom.

The mustard seed,	Matt. xiii. 31; Mark iv. 31; Luke xiii. 18, 19.
The leaven,	Matt. xiii. 33; Luke xiii. 20, 21.

318. Simple and obvious as the interpretation of these stories in general now seems, it is evident from the inspired history that the hearers of our Lord were seldom able to apprehend it. The apostles, who enjoyed much better opportunities of ascertaining the mind of Christ than his ordinary followers, were themselves often at a loss to know their Master's meaning, when he spoke in parables. There seems no reason to doubt that the crowds, which followed Jesus, preferred the story to its interpretation; the scene presented to their minds was so vivid, the characters were so powerfully drawn, the speeches were so short and impressive, that their admiration of the narrative, combined with their ignorance of the real nature of Christ's work, made them indifferent to the truth of which the story was only an illustration. But it was impossible to forget the parables of Jesus, and when light at length broke on their minds, the reference to gospel truths was at once seen. The form, into which our Lord threw these narratives, renders it unlikely, that every line of the picture was intended to have its counterpart in the truth illustrated: many things were added to increase the vividness of the scene; many touches were given to the picture, which, although not requisite to bring out the truth more clearly, served to impart additional interest to the scene, and gain for it a lodgment in men's minds. A traveller, for example, is represented falling among thieves on the dangerous road from Jerusalem to Jericho; a priest and Levite pass by on the other side; a Samaritan binds up his wounds, pours in oil and wine, pays twopence for his entertainment at the inn, and charges himself with any additional expense that may be incurred. All these points give

a colouring to the picture, which fixes it for ever in the mind; they have little connexion with brotherly love, which the parable of the good Samaritan was designed to illustrate, and no commentator would now think of explaining these circumstances by the doctrines of the gospel. It is the same with nearly all the other parables delivered by our Lord, though not to an equal extent; and much caution requires to be exercised in distinguishing the filling up of the picture, the background and drapery, we might say, from the actual scene. Our Lord himself explained several parables to his disciples; and manifest differences prevail in the extent, to which he applied the minor features of the narratives to gospel truths. In the parable of the sower, for example, every incident, however minute, finds a counterpart in the interpretation; but, in the parable of the tares, there is no explanation of such touches as "while men slept," "the enemy went his way," or of the dialogue between the servants and the householder. In explaining the less important parts of a parable, it should be borne in mind, that no interpretation can be admitted, which is opposed to the otherwise ascertained truths of Scripture; the commendation bestowed on the unjust steward, who conciliated the debtors by defrauding his master, was never designed to recommend such conduct to us; and the prayer of the rich man in hell to Abraham cannot be quoted as scriptural authority for the invocation of saints. Sometimes the Saviour expressly stated the main truth which he intended to enforce in his parables; at other times he left it to be gathered from the context: in either case there is no difficulty in arriving at a general understanding of the parable.

319. Teaching by parables is not altogether peculiar to the gospel; for a few are found in the Old Testament: some of the latter border on the region of the fable, in which the lower animals are endowed with the powers and feelings of humanity. The Old Testament parables are as follows:—

The trees making a king (Jotham),	Judges ix. 7.
The poor man's ewe-lamb (Nathan),	2 Sam. xii. 1.
The two brothers (woman of Tekoa),	2 Sam. xiv. 6.

The prisoner (a prophet), . . .	1 Kings xx. 39.
The thistle and cedar (Joash), . .	2 Kings xiv. 9.
The vineyard (Isaiah), ...	Isaiah v. 1.
The eagles and the vine (Ezekiel), .	Ezek. xvii. 1.

320. Multitudes of people of all ranks followed the Saviour while he was preaching near Capernaum; and at length the crowds became so great, that Jesus prepared to retire across the Sea of Galilee. His human nature, exhausted with the labours in which he had been engaged, needed repose; evening was drawing on, and several boats were waiting to convey the twelve and the other disciples to the opposite side. Matthew has preserved a record of two different features of character, that were displayed as Jesus was stepping on board; the self-confidence of the scribe, who, without counting the cost, avowed his resolution to follow Christ, and the weak faith of the disciple, who wished to leave the Redeemer, that he might pay the last duties to his departed father. As they sailed, he fell asleep, and a storm suddenly burst on them from the hills that hem in the lake. The boat in which Jesus had embarked was filled with water and ready to sink, when the disciples awoke their Master, and told him of their danger. Rebuking their want of faith, he stilled the tempest with a word. This miracle made a deep impression on all who witnessed it: Mark states that there was a number of boats in company on the lake; all of them were in danger, and all equally experienced the miraculous deliverance.

321. On reaching the eastern side of the lake, our Lord proceeded to Gadara, a heathen town situated on the left bank of the ancient Hieromax, and not far from the point where the Jordan leaves the Sea of Tiberias. It was built on the top of a limestone-hill, in the sides of which spacious tombs, sometimes fitted with stone-doors, were scooped out to receive the dead. Two demoniacs, of whom one in particular, if we may judge from the account in Mark and Luke, attracted attention, resided in these chambers, and were the terror of the neighbourhood. When our Lord approached, the fiercer of the two, addressing Jesus as the Son of the most high God, urged him

to leave them alone; the evil powers who ruled in his breast knew the Redeemer, and, with a fore-feeling of their day of doom, were compelled to acknowledge his authority. They were awed by the presence of the Mighty One; but, as if anxious to prove that their power to work mischief was still unimpaired, they requested from him permission to enter a great herd of swine, that was feeding on one of the hills overhanging the sea. Jesus granted them their wish, and the swine, suddenly running down a steep place into the lake, were drowned. The evil spirits were allowed thus to destroy the swine, most likely because the harm they did was a convincing proof that their strength was unimpaired, and that the healing of the unhappy man was a recovery of health, not in the ordinary course of nature, but by an act of Divine power. Whether or not the herd belonged to Jews who sold the flesh to the heathen inhabitants of Gadara, is a point on which there may be a reasonable difference of opinion,[1] for Scripture is wholly silent on the subject; but there can be no doubt, that the power of the devils to work mischief, after leaving the two men, was one of the clearest proofs of our Lord's authority over the world of spirits recorded in the gospel history. The inhabitants of the town, alarmed at the report of the herdsmen, of whom there were several, and unaffected by the sight of the once wretched maniac now restored to reason and sitting at the feet of Jesus, besought the Redeemer to leave their district: they knew, from what had happened, that no force could compel him to leave the place. It does not appear to have been the intention of Jesus to remain on the east side of the lake, for the ship in which he had crossed was still waiting for him, and the people on the western shore were expecting his return. Accordingly, after dismissing the men whom he had restored to health, he crossed to Capernaum.

322. On reaching that town Jesus became the guest of Matthew, who invited "many publicans and sinners" to meet his new

[1] As there were several keepers it may be questioned whether the herd was the property of one man, or of a number. If the latter, the probability that the owners were Jews, is considerably lessened, for Josephus states that the town and neighbourhood were inhabited by heathens.

Master. The Scribes and Pharisees belonging to the neighbourhood, were offended at the freedom with which he mingled in the company of these disreputable persons; and the followers of John the Baptist residing in Capernaum, were surprised that, instead of recommending fasting like John, he should allow his disciples to indulge in feasting. He met the objections of the former by stating, that he was sent to call the ungodly to repentance; and the doubts of the latter by showing, that his followers had no reason to mourn so long as he was on the earth with them. Wherever the exclusive and ascetic spirit of Judaism is allowed to leaven the truth of Christ, the result is similar to what takes place when new wine is poured into old skin bottles. The gas escaping from the wine expands, and at length bursts the no longer elastic skin; and, in like manner, the freedom which Christ came to establish, if confined within the bounds of "touch not, taste not, handle not," in all countries, and under all circumstances, would be lost like the wine. The conversation dropped on the entrance of Jairus, one of the chief rulers of the synagogue: his little daughter was lying at the point of death, and he earnestly requested Jesus to lay his hands upon her that she might live. While our Lord was proceeding to the ruler's house, virtue went out of him to heal an unfortunate woman who pressed forward to touch his clothes, in the belief that her disease would be immediately cured. A miracle so astonishing was probably intended to prepare the wavering ruler for the trial, to which his faith was subjected, when immediately afterwards messengers arrived to inform him that his daughter was dead, and that it was useless to trouble the Master. His faith was still further tried when, on entering his house, the hired mourners turned into mockery the words of Jesus, "The maid is not dead but sleepeth;" but it triumphed over all these temptations to unbelief, and was rewarded with the restoration of the girl to life and health. Other instances of the dependence of miracles on faith immediately followed, according to the Gospels of Matthew and Mark: two blind men were restored to sight, on confessing their faith in Jesus as the Son of David; a dumb man possessed with a devil was also

healed; and our Lord appeared to have paid a second visit to Nazareth, where the unbelief of the people prevented him from doing more than healing a few sick folk. It was during this visit that the townspeople called him the carpenter, the carpenter's son, and the brother of James and Joses, and Simon and Judas.

323. The sending forth of the twelve to preach in the cities of Galilee appears to have taken place at this time; but, previous to their departure, our Lord delivered to them a solemn charge, in which he warned them of approaching trials, and commissioned them to act as his ambassadors among "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Matthew has preserved this charge most fully. Christ armed these messengers with extraordinary power over the world of spirits, but strictly forbade them to provide for temporal wants: they were in the service of God, therefore he would provide food and shelter; they were in haste, therefore they were "shod with sandals," not with shoes. Rejection of their offers would prove the ruin of cities and individuals, even although it might also lead to sufferings and death on their part. Hence their Master warned them, in a prophetic spirit, of the persecutions which were in store for his followers, directing them what to expect, and how to act in the hour of danger. The providence of God, which extends to all things however minute, was the great source of comfort on which he encouraged them to rely, when their lives were threatened by kings and councils. The labours of the twelve on this journey were confined to their own countrymen, but their commission was afterwards extended to embrace "every creature," and "all nations," and to continue "to the end of the world." To fit them for this great work, Christ not only endowed them with power over disease and death, but gave them "the keys of the kingdom of God," and promised them the Holy Spirit. They were "ambassadors for Christ;" they were "witnesses of what they had seen and heard" in his company on earth; they were a testimony against kings, and governors, and councils; and, "guided into all truth" themselves, they founded churches, and required believers to keep the traditions they delivered.

324. The mission of the apostles was attended with great success; they cast out devils, and healed the sick after anointing them with oil (Mark). Mark and Luke connect the mighty works which were thus wrought by the apostles, with the story of the execution of the Baptist by Herod, and with the fears of the tyrant that his victim had risen from the dead. The birthday festivities of that prince had been stained by the cruel murder of John, in the Castle of Machærus;[1] the army of Herod had been defeated shortly after, and common rumour ascribed the disaster to this crime; but now every part of the country was filled with reports of crowds following men, who raised the dead or healed the sick, and Herod's conscience suggested that John had risen from the grave to call him to account. The death of the Baptist induced Jesus to leave Galilee, and retire privately across the lake to the neighbourhood of Bethsaida (Julias), a city belonging to Philip, Herod's brother (Matthew). Many who observed him leaving Capernaum followed the boat on foot; every village they passed furnished additions to the crowd, until upwards of 5000 people were following at a short distance when he disembarked. He withdrew to a mountain, but the people discovered his retreat, and the miracle of feeding 5000 men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes, was wrought to satisfy their hunger. So astounding was this miracle, that the people were prepared to acknowledge him as Messiah, and rise in rebellion against Rome; but he dismissed them for the night, and ordered his disciples to cross to the western Bethsaida (Mark), or the neighbouring city of Capernaum (John), while he himself went up into the mountain to pray. The apostles were probably too well acquainted with the sea, not to notice signs of the storm that soon burst upon them; at least they embarked with great reluctance. They appear to have passed the night in buffeting with a contrary wind; for, though they left the eastern shore about sunset, they were only twenty-five or thirty furlongs from it towards dawn. Jesus saw the danger of their position, and went towards them, walking on the sea; they were at first thrown into great fear, supposing

[1] Joseph. xviii. 5. 2.

that he was a spirit, and, remembering their former deliverance from similar peril, were unduly elated on finding that it was Jesus. Peter attempted to walk on the sea, like his Master; but his danger proves that faith may be forward and rash when it is far from strong. As soon as Jesus and Peter were received into the ship, the wind ceased, the sea became calm, and the disciples were close to the western shore. Astonished at these displays of almighty power, all on board worshipped the Saviour, and professed their faith in him as the Son of God.

325. On reaching the shore, Christ was immediately recognised, and many sick persons were brought from all parts of the district of Gennesaret to be healed. After wandering through the cities and villages in the neighbourhood, he proceeded to Capernaum, where the people whom he fed at Bethsaida had also arrived. In the synagogue of that town our Lord delivered the second great discourse recorded by the apostle John; it originated in the desire of the people to have a repetition of the miracle they had witnessed, and was on "the bread of life." Jesus declared himself the true manna which came down from heaven, and limited the enjoyment of everlasting life to those who eat his flesh and drink his blood. There is no reason to doubt that, in this discourse, our Lord intended to censure the absurd ideas then prevalent among the Hebrews regarding Messiah; they entertained the extravagant notion that he would lead out the whole nation into the wilderness, provide flesh and manna there, and enact, on a greater scale, the miracles wrought during the journey from Egypt. Great, therefore, was the surprise of the people to hear the statement of Christ, that his followers must eat his flesh and drink his blood. Many of them immediately forsook him; others wavered for a little, but left likewise; and at last it seemed as if the twelve would also renounce fellowship with their Master. But Jesus was only trying their faith: the question which he put to them, half in reproach, half in sorrow, "Will ye also go away?" scattered their doubts, and drew from Peter the strong declaration, "We are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

CHAPTER XVI.

THIRD YEAR OF OUR LORD'S PUBLIC MINISTRY.

	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
On eating with unwashen hands —*Capernaum*, ...	15. 1-20	7. 1-23		
The Syrophenician woman—*Phenicia*, ...	15. 21-28	7. 24-30		
Miracles of healing: four thousand fed—*Decapolis*, . . .	15. 29-38	7. 31-8. 9		
Pharisees and Sadducees seek a sign—*Magdala*, ...	15. 39-16. 4	8. 10-12		
Leaven of the Pharisees—*N.E. coast of Sea of Galilee*, . .	16. 4-12	8. 13-21		
Healing of a blind man—*Bethsaida*, ...		8. 22-26		
The Apostles' profession of faith —*near Cæsarea Philippi*, . .	16. 13-20	8. 27-30	9. 18-21	
Our Lord predicts his sufferings and death — *near Cæsarea Philippi*, ...	16. 21-28	8. 31-9. 1	9. 22-27	
The Transfiguration, ...	17. 1-13	9. 2-13	9. 28-36	
Healing of a demoniac, . . .	17. 14-21	9. 14-29	9. 37-43	
Jesus again foretells his own death and resurrection—*Galilee*, .	17. 22-23	9. 30-32	9. 43-45	
Tribute money provided—*Capernaum*, ...	17. 24-27			
Disciples contend for pre-eminence—*Capernaum*, . . .	18. 1-35	9. 33-50	9. 46-50	
Final departure from Galilee, .			9. 51-62	7. 2-10
Seventy sent out, ...			10. 1-16	
Ten lepers cleansed, ...			17. 11-19	
Feast of Tabernacles—*Jerusalem*, ...				7. 11-8. 1
The woman taken in adultery, .				8. 2-11
Jesus threatened by the Jews—*Jerusalem*, ...				8. 12-59

	Matt.	Mark.	Luke.	John.
Parable of the good Samaritan, .			10. 25-37	
Jesus at Bethany, ...			10. 38-42	
Disciples again taught how to pray, ...			11. 1-13	
The Seventy return, ...			10. 17-24	
Healing of a blind man on the Sabbath—*Jerusalem*, . . .				9. 1–10. 21
Feast of the Dedication, . . .				10. 22-42
Raising of Lazarus—*Bethany*, .				11. 1-46
Jesus retires to Ephraim, . .				11. 47-54
Is again followed by multitudes —*Perœa*, ...	19. 1, 2	10. 1	13. 10-21	
Journeys towards Jerusalem, .			13. 22-35	
Dines with a Pharisee—*Perœa*,			14. 1-24	
Who are true disciples?—*Perœa*,			14. 25-35	
Parables: The lost sheep; Prodigal son; Unjust steward; Rich man and Lazarus— *Perœa*, ...			15. 1–16. 31	
Faith and humility inculcated— *Perœa*, ...			17. 1-10	
On the coming of Christ, . . .			17. 20-37	
Parables: Importunate widow; Pharisee and publican—*Perœa*,			18. 1-14	
On divorce—*Perœa*, ...	19. 3-12	10. 2-12		
Jesus blesses children—*Perœa*,	19. 13-15	10. 13-16	18. 15 17	
The rich young man. Parable of labourers in vineyard—*Perœa*,	19. 16–20. 16	10. 17-31	18. 18-30	
Jesus a third time foretells his death—*Perœa*, ...	20. 17-19	10. 32-34	18. 31-34	
Request of James and John— *Perœa*, ...	20. 20-28	10. 35-45		
Healing of two blind men—*Jericho*, ...	20. 29-34	10. 46-52	18. 35-43	
Visit to Zaccheus. Parable of the ten pounds—*Jericho*, . .			19. 1-28	
Jesus arrives at Bethany, . .				11. 55–12. 11

326. Our Lord does not appear to have visited Jerusalem at the Passover, which was celebrated shortly after the feeding of the five thousand; for the rulers were plotting against his life, and it was no longer safe for him to frequent the temple courts. Disappointed in the expectation that he would be present at the feast, the Sanhedrim sent a deputation of scribes and Pharisees to Galilee, who might watch his proceedings and report his conduct. The strict attachment of these learned men to tradition was shocked, when they saw the disciples of Jesus eating without having first washed their hands; but our Lord greatly offended them by rebuking their hypocritical preference of ceremonial practices to the moral precepts of the law. As the hostility of the rulers kept Jesus from attending the feast at Jerusalem, it is probable that the presence of this deputation in Capernaum, and their influence with Herod, induced him to withdraw to the neighbourhood of Tyre. In the crowds which followed Christ during the previous part of his ministry, special notice is taken of those who came "from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon;" and this circumstance, combined with the hatred of the rulers, explains the statement of Mark: "He went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it." But a woman of the place found out his retreat, and besought him to heal her unfortunate daughter. It was the first instance of a heathen coming to Christ. She showed her faith by first calling him "Son of David," a title which she probably got from those who informed her where Jesus might be found, and then by refusing to leave him without a favourable answer to her prayer. Her daughter was restored to health, but no other miracle is said to have been wrought in that place. Our Lord afterwards withdrew to a mountain in Decapolis, on the south-east shore of the sea of Galilee, where the healing of a deaf and dumb man created great excitement among the crowd that had again gathered round him (Mark). For three days after, the multitude continued to bring the sick and diseased to Jesus; and the astonishment caused by his miracles was still further increased, when he fed

upwards of four thousand people with seven loaves and a few fishes, before sending them away. He then crossed the lake to Magdala, a city of Dalmanutha, where the deputation from the Sanhedrim tempted him for a sign from heaven, and were indignantly refused. Bethsaida (Julias) and the north-east coast of the lake, were the next scenes of our Lord's labours, to avoid the snares and importunity of these learned men. From the address which he there delivered to his disciples on the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod, it appears that the Sadducees and the Herodians professed similar principles, so far at least as subjection to Rome was concerned: neither party wished to see it disturbed.[1]

327. According to the gospel of Mark, our Lord healed a blind man in Bethsaida; but no further particulars of his visit to that town have been recorded. He next journeyed towards the region of Cæsarea Philippi, where Peter in the name of the twelve emphatically declared the second time that, whatever others might think, they believed him "to be the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Saviour assured them that this belief was the rock on which his Church should be built, and against which the gates of hell should contend in vain. Some suppose that Jesus called Peter the foundation rock of the church; but that is sufficiently disproved by the fact that, though the word *rock* is used in a somewhat similar sense in numerous passages of the Old Testament, it is invariably applied to the Most High. The gates of hell mean the same thing as the powers of hell, because the gates of eastern cities were the usual places of concourse, deliberation, and judgment. Our Lord also gave to his disciples "the keys of the kingdom of heaven," that is, the right to bind or loose in every matter[2] that might arise in the church. They were empowered to pronounce a man guilty of sin, or absolved from the penalty of it, in virtue of the rule laid down in Scripture, "Let every man that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity;" but there is another rule referred to, which proves that the apostles had

[1] Matt. xvi. 6, comp. with Mark viii. 15.

[2] Matt. xviii. 15-18.

not an absolute power to forgive or retain sin, "The Lord knoweth them that are his."[1] Wherever sin is repented of, there is reasonable ground for declaring it forgiven; wherever it is cherished, there is equally just ground for declaring it retained: a man is loosed from it in the former case, and bound by it in the latter; but both parts of the rule might fail in practice, and the second rule remained to correct mistakes in applying the first. It appears also that this power of binding and loosing was not given to the apostles only, but was one of the privileges bestowed by the Saviour upon his church.[2]

328. It is singular that on this, as on several other occasions, our Lord strictly forbade his disciples to publish his greatness and office to the world; but there is really no reason for surprise at this enforced concealment of his claims. Members of the Sanhedrim had no right to expect from him a declaration of his Messiahship: the events connected with his birth, the testimonies of John, and his own numerous miracles, were sufficient to convince every unbiassed inquirer of his Divine commission. The rulers were bound by the law to acknowledge Jesus as a prophet, or to disprove the high claims which he openly made to having been in heaven, and to equality with God the Father; but they did neither. They shrunk from investigating the matter, lest it might turn out that he spoke the truth. To tell the learned class that Jesus was the Christ was therefore unnecessary: the proof of his Messiahship was open to their inspection, and they were bound to acknowledge its sufficiency or show its falsehood. Other reasons induced our Lord to keep his followers from proclaiming his Messiahship to the common people. Although crowds of probably eight or ten thousand people accompanied him in his wanderings, comparatively few had a correct idea of the nature of his mission to this earth; the lower classes would have risen against the Romans, if their hopes of Divine assistance had been excited by the apostles insisting on the Messiahship of Jesus; and it was only by withdrawing from the multitude on one occasion that our Lord put down an attempt

[1] 2 Tim. ii. 19. [2] Matt. xviii. 15-18.

at rebellion, caused by his marvellous works. If the mass of the nation had been fully convinced that Jesus was the Christ; if they had heard his followers appealing to his mighty works, and proclaiming in all places that he was the long-promised Son of David, there is good reason to fear, if we may judge from the worldly hopes and excited temper of the Jewish people, that risings would have taken place in many parts of the country. It is true that our Lord did once at Nazareth publicly declare himself the Christ; but he knew that there was no danger in that case.

329. In consequence of the false views of Messiah's character which prevailed among the Jews, our Lord gave the twelve a correct idea of the nature of his work on earth. Like their worldly-minded countrymen, they expected an earthly kingdom and a universal empire; but to their great surprise, Jesus foretold his own sufferings and death. So deeply rooted were their prejudices, however, that the clear statements of our Lord were either misunderstood or disregarded till after his ascension. The sermon which he delivered to the people immediately after Peter's profession of faith, was also on the subject of his approaching sufferings, and the impression they would make on men: he spoke of those who, by being ashamed of him, should have no part in everlasting life; and of that better class who, taking up their cross, that is, living a life of toil and danger in his service, should be rewarded at the coming of the Son of Man. The trial, which the faith of the disciples received by these predictions of suffering and shame, was followed about a week after by an unusual display of Christ's glory in his transfiguration. As there is no reason for believing that our Lord had then left Cæsarea Philippi, it is not improbable that this event took place near that town. Peter, and James, and John accompanied Jesus to the summit of a mountain, where he probably proposed to spend the night in prayer.[1] The three apostles, after sleeping for some time, were awakened by the brightness which surrounded their Master, and by the hum of persons in conversa-

[1] Luke ix. 37.

tion. Notwithstanding the fear into which they were thrown, they recognised Moses and Elias in company with Jesus, and understood, according to Luke, that the subject of conversation was his decease at Jerusalem. Their terror was increased by a bright cloud overshadowing them, and by a voice proclaiming, "This is my beloved Son." Falling on their faces, they did not look up until Jesus touched them, when they found themselves alone with him on the hill-top. The events which preceded this singular vision leave no room to doubt, that it was intended to strengthen the faith of the twelve in the Messiahship of Jesus, and to prepare them for the sufferings which he would soon undergo; but it is also probable that these heavenly messengers, like the angel who appeared in Gethsemane, were sent to strengthen the Saviour for the great work that lay before him. There was a propriety in Moses and Elias appearing at the transfiguration, which deserves to be remarked. Both of them were sent with a Divine commission to reform the national worship of Israel; and with them only can the Saviour be compared in the arduous work which he undertook. Jewish history recognises three great reformers, who were specially set apart to the office of "turning the hearts of the people back again"—Moses, Elias, and Jesus; and the work of the first two stood in a peculiar relation to that of the third. The law of Moses was the shadow, the gospel of Jesus was the substance: the still small voice on Horeb was the great agent in the reformation under Elias; that same voice, enforced by the Holy Spirit, is the means of turning sinners to the truth as it is in Jesus.

330. As the three apostles came down from the hill with their Master, a solemn charge was laid on them not to make known what they had seen and heard till the Son of Man had risen from the dead,—a statement which they did not understand. On approaching the place where the disciples were left the evening before, they saw a great crowd and a number of scribes, probably those whom Jesus avoided by leaving Galilee, questioning the nine apostles. The reason was soon known: although accustomed to cast out devils, and to heal diseases,

they had failed to expel an unclean spirit from a dumb boy, and these learned men were calling in question their Master's power over the world of spirits. Lamenting the unbelief of the apostles and people, Jesus healed the child, and informed the disciples that the kind of spirit he had cast out was new to them, and would only yield to earnest prayer and fasting on their part.

331. Our Lord then returned to Capernaum, but privately, that he might not by any public displays of wisdom and power inflame the hatred of the rulers (Mark). For some time at this period, he ceased teaching in public, and avoided crowds; confining his labours apparently to his immediate followers, and to those who applied for guidance or assistance. A miraculous provision of tribute-money was made by Jesus for himself and Peter during this season of retirement: Christ as King of kings, and his servant should have been exempted from all taxes; but, to avoid offence, he allowed Peter to pay the money. It is sometimes thought that the tribute referred to here was the half-shekel paid by every Jew to the sanctuary;[1] but the context rather favours the idea that it was a tax imposed by the Romans, of which no other record has been preserved.[2] A dispute, which arose among the disciples at this time regarding their respective positions in the kingdom of heaven, furnished the Redeemer with a text for a discourse on humility, and on being at peace with all men. Members of his kingdom, he told them, were like little children in humility; they gave no offence to God or man, but parted with what they valued most highly rather than offend their Maker or their fellow-believers. The conscience of the apostle John reproached him when he heard these words; for, as if afraid of having wronged one of Christ's little ones, he interrupted the Saviour, according to Mark and Luke, with the story of a man, whom some of them forbade to cast out devils in Christ's name. Jesus reproved their officious meddling, and proceeded to sketch the danger of offending the little ones of his kingdom. One of the arguments that he used

[1] Exod. xxx 13. [2] Except, perhaps, in Luke ii. 2; Acts v. 37.

on that occasion is liable to be misunderstood; "In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." As the Jews believed that an angel was appointed to watch over every child of Abraham from his birth to his death,[1] it might be imagined that our Lord countenances that idea in this passage. But Scripture represents angels as ministering spirits,[2] waiting on the heirs of salvation, and nothing more specific can be fairly drawn from the argument used by our Lord. Despise not my people, he says, for angels are their servants; and these servants are so exalted that they stand in the presence of the Most High.

332. Our Lord did not appear in public till the feast of tabernacles. He was living in retirement among his relatives; few were aware of his place of retreat; and the rulers, surprised at his sudden disappearance from public life, were anxiously inquiring after him among the crowds which thronged Jerusalem at the feast.[3] Even his own brethren did not believe in his Divine commission; they urged him in mockery no longer to conceal his works and claims, but to show them openly to the world at the approaching feast. It was usual for families to go up to Jerusalem together at the three great festivals, but Jesus did not accompany his unbelieving relatives on this occasion. After their departure from Galilee, he took the shorter road to Jerusalem through Samaria, instead of the road through Peræa, which the Galilean Jews preferred, for the purpose of avoiding the country of their enemies. It was probably during this journey that James and John wished their Master to destroy a Samaritan village by fire from heaven,[4] because the inhabitants would not receive him. Critics also suppose that the sending forth of the Seventy took place about this time, but the place from which they were sent out is matter of conjecture. The powers and privileges bestowed on these preachers of the kingdom, were nearly the same as those contained in the commission of the twelve; the number seventy had reference appa-

[1] Acts xii. 15. [2] Heb. i. 14. [3] John vii. 11.

[4] "As Elias did," with obvious reference to the transfiguration.

rently to the idea of the Jews, that there were as many heathen nations on earth. It may be doubted, however, whether their mission had any connexion with this journey; for our Lord was in retirement before leaving Galilee, and was journeying, "not openly, but as it were in secret," when on the road to Jerusalem: neither of these facts can be easily reconciled with the supposition, that he was then attended by upwards of eighty followers. Although journeying in secret, Jesus could not be hid; ten lepers recognised him as he entered a village of Samaria, and entreated him to restore them to health. He bade them show themselves to the priests; they were healed of their distemper before they had gone far on the road, but only one of them evinced his gratitude by turning back and giving Christ thanks. Luke, by whom this miracle is related, carefully takes notice that he was a Samaritan, and a stranger.

333. The apostle John has presented the readers of his Gospel with a vivid picture of the different opinions, entertained regarding Jesus by the crowds assembled in Jerusalem at this time, and of the astonishment and disorder into which his sudden appearance at the feast threw the rulers. His enemies had neither forgotten nor forgiven the breach of their traditions which he committed eighteen months before, in healing the paralytic at Bethesda; their hatred was unappeased; they were still resolved to put him to death. During his long-continued absence from Jerusalem they could boast, with some show of reason, that he was afraid to put himself within their reach; and people were led to expect, that his supposed violation of the Sabbath would sooner or later be punished with death. Few of the rulers were favourable to Jesus, but many of the people acknowledged him as Messiah. A violent party, supported by the rulers, pronounced him an impostor and a deceiver; and when their hatred was excited to the utmost, they called him a Samaritan, the greatest reproach they could imagine, or declared that he had a devil and was mad. Those who believed in his Messiahship were afraid to speak openly in his defence; the bolder among them contenting themselves with the remark, "He is a

good man." A considerable number of people seem to have been undecided what to believe; they supposed that the marks given for identifying Messiah, when he should appear, did not apply in the case of Jesus; the Rabbins taught that he would be born in Bethlehem, that he would suddenly withdraw entirely from the world, and as suddenly reappear from some unknown place; but these people were not aware that Bethlehem was the birthplace of Jesus, and they knew who he was, and whence he came. A great change took place in the opinions and boldness of the people when Jesus arrived in Jerusalem. He openly taught in the temple; he attacked the rulers in their own stronghold; and many of the lower ranks then avowed their belief that he was the Christ, and that the rulers should at once acknowledge his authority. The Sanhedrim, in alarm, ordered the temple-guard to apprehend Jesus, and bring him up for trial. Some of the people were prepared to assist in the attempt; but the officers, overawed by what they saw and heard, returned without accomplishing their purpose, declaring, in excuse, "Never man spake like this man." The council broke up in disorder, on seeing the attempt baffled, after first reproaching Nicodemus for believing on Jesus, and then cursing the people for their ignorance of the law.

334. But the Pharisees, although unable to apprehend the Redeemer, lost no opportunity of lowering him in the estimation of the people. It was intimated publicly, that every one who professed faith in Jesus as the Messiah, should be put out of the synagogue; and steps were taken by the Pharisees to entangle him in his talk. They mingled in the crowd of believers who stood round Jesus, and tried to twist every sentiment, which they did not understand, into what might seem absurd or heretical. They always pressed forward so as to be near the Saviour, that they might be able to interrupt his discourses, to wound his feelings, or to provoke him, as they thought, to speak hasty words. When he was addressing himself to his own followers, and illustrating the truths of the kingdom, these cavillers would propose difficulties or throw in offensive comments on

what he said. It is only by bearing this in mind that the long and important conversation, which took place in the treasury of the temple at this time, can be understood. Jesus began a discourse to his own followers on the privileges of believers;[1] his first words were, "The truth will make you free." A proud Pharisee, offended at this allusion to their subjection to Rome, cried out, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man;" when a debate arose on that point, which was only closed by the enemies of Jesus declaring that he was a Samaritan. The Redeemer then took up another privilege of believers, "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." His enemies immediately interrupted him again with, "Now we know that thou hast a devil;" and the debate on this point ended in the declaration of Jesus, "Before Abraham was, I am," and in an attempt of the Pharisees to stone him.

335. It was probably about this time that the events recorded in Luke x. 17–xi. 13 took place; at least there is little reason to doubt that our Lord paid a visit to the house of Martha and Mary at Bethany. But the most important events that happened after the conversation already mentioned, were the healing of a blind man on the Sabbath, and the sermon on the good Shepherd, to which it led: both are found in the Gospel of John. The miracle was followed by a judicial investigation of the matter before the Sanhedrim, and on that account has received deserved prominence in the inspired history. The enemies of Jesus brought the blind man to the Pharisees, and the facts of the case were laid before them; one party declared that Jesus was a prophet; another affirmed that he was a sinner, and a breaker of the Sabbath. Inquiries were instituted to ascertain whether the man had really been blind: his parents were summoned before the court, and the fact was proved to the satisfaction of every unbiassed judge, that he was born blind. Still the rulers suspected fraud, and urged the man to confess, "Give glory to God,"—that is, confess that there has been collusion in

[1] John viii. 30-59.

the matter.[1] But this bold, though unlearned believer, maintained that the person who healed him could not be a sinner; he must be a prophet of God. The learned men of the nation, in their endeavours to stem the course of truth, were held at bay by an illiterate beggar, whom they may often have passed on the streets with pity or contempt;—a babe in knowledge, according to prophecy, gave perfect glory to God, while the wise and powerful blasphemed. Notwithstanding the boldness of the once blind man, he was entirely ignorant of the person of Christ: he showed great faith, in the noble testimony which he bore to the character of his benefactor, and in enduring the sentence of excommunication[2] launched against him by the chafed rulers; but the greatest trial of his faith came from Jesus himself. The Saviour met him after the sentence was pronounced, and introduced himself as the Son of God. It was a greater test of faith for a Jew to believe this than to receive him as a prophet; but the poor man did not hesitate, he immediately believed and worshipped. It is singular that John has not given the name of the ungrateful paralytic healed about eighteen months before this time, and of this blind man. Both miracles were of the utmost importance in establishing the Divine mission of Jesus; and there does not now seem any reason why their names should have been withheld, when those of Nicodemus and Lazarus were given.

336. Our Lord appears to have continued in or near Jerusalem in the interval between the Feast of Tabernacles and the Feast of the Dedication; but the enmity of the rulers at length became so great, that he deemed it proper to retire to Bethabara beyond Jordan. During his absence, Lazarus fell sick and died at Bethany. Messengers had been sent to summon Christ to the relief of his friend; but he purposely delayed his journey, and did not reach the village till after the funeral. His bosom was wrung with grief as he accompanied the sisters of the deceased to the grave, and tears flowed from his eyes, notwithstanding strong efforts to keep the sorrow within his own breast.

[1] John ix. 24; Josh. vii. 19.

[2] "Cast him out," John ix. 34, comp. 22.

The scene was very impressive. Enemies, who had long watched for his halting, were looking on, coldly passing remarks on his excessive grief and apparent inability to help the distressed: friends, perhaps the most attached he had on earth, were reproaching him for indifference or delay; and none seemed to think that he could do what he had done before, and what Elijah and Elisha had also done—raise the dead. In the corruption and grave of Lazarus he saw saddening effects of the fall of man; in the hard-heartedness of enemies, and in the unbelief of friends, he saw the more dreadful forms of spiritual death; and in both he discerned the terrible load of guilt and grief that was destined soon to weigh down his own soul. Death in all its forms stood before him; he got a glimpse of the enemy with whom he would shortly engage in conflict; and he took in at one glance the black roll of sin and sorrow from the beginning to the end of time, for which he had undertaken to account. It was the sight of these things that made grief boil within his breast, until he found relief in tears. The miracle of raising Lazarus, which immediately followed, increased the number of believers and the enmity of the rulers: a council of the chief men was summoned, and Caiaphas, the high priest, speaking by inspiration, although an enemy of the truth, prophesied that one man should die for the whole nation. It was determined from that time to put Jesus to death, as soon as an opportunity occurred: it was also resolved, in impotent hatred, to cut off Lazarus.

337. In consequence of the resolution to which the Sanhedrim had come, the Redeemer withdrew to Ephraim, a city supposed to have been situated about twenty Roman miles to the north of Jerusalem. It cannot be said that the movements of Jesus are known with certainty in the interval between this visit to Ephraim and his public entry into Jerusalem a few days before his death. As he approached Jerusalem on that occasion from Jericho, according to Luke, it is probable that the visit to Peræa, recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, took place in this interval. Probably, also, the events contained in Luke xiii. 10-

xviii. 14, happened in that district at the same time; but it is not impossible that some of the parables and discourses there related may have been delivered elsewhere, during the previous part of our Lord's public ministry. The same points were discussed in that country, which had been debated again and again in Galilee and Judea; the same persevering enemies followed Jesus to propose ensnaring questions, to irritate by malicious opposition, and insidiously to entrap, under the guise of friendship. Once in a synagogue, and again at dinner in a Pharisee's house, Jesus effected miraculous cures on the Sabbath; his enemies were silenced but not appeased; and our Lord delivered in the synagogue, or at the private feast, or to the crowds that were hastening to observe the Passover, numerous parables and discourses illustrative of the hypocrisy, the covetousness, and the pretensions of the Pharisees. Some of these learned men advised him to leave Peræa, because Herod intended to kill him; but the reception they met with renders it probable that they wished to get rid of his presence, and make him return to Jerusalem,[1] where he would be more in the power of the Jewish rulers. These bitter enemies are even said to have derided his teaching, and to have asked, apparently in mockery, when the kingdom of God should come; but their usual course was to propose ensnaring questions, which might lead him to speak against time-honoured traditions. On one of these occasions, Jesus plainly declared his right to set aside the laws laid down by Moses. That lawgiver permitted the Hebrews to divorce their wives on certain grounds, which were interpreted by a party of the Pharisees to mean for any cause whatever; the question of divorce "for every cause" was brought before Jesus by some of them, but, instead of inquiring into the Mosaic precepts on this point, he referred them to the original institution of marriage, and declared that adultery was the only cause of divorce. His disciples, according to Matthew, remarked to him on hearing this, "It is good not to marry," a sentiment which he approved under certain conditions,

[1] Luke xiii. 31, comp. with 34, 35.

and which the apostle Paul afterwards considered suitable to the state of the Christian Church in his time.[1]

338. An event took place about this time which was destined to exercise considerable influence on the development of the Church after the ascension of the Redeemer. A rich young ruler, who believed that he had kept all the Commandments, and fancied that he could earn eternal life by doing something more, came running after Jesus, and wished to be told what he should do to gain that end. There is an air of simplicity and sincerity about the young man's mode of address, which forbids the idea that he was prompted by unworthy motives in putting this question to our Lord: Jesus loved him, and with a thorough knowledge of his besetting sin, said, "Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." This was a work which the inquirer never dreamed that Jesus would bid him do; he came confidently believing that Christ could direct him, and committing his case into Christ's hands; but when the advice given did not answer to his wishes, his faith failed, and he went away very sorrowful. A desire after wealth, by fair means or foul, was one of the great sins of that age; our Lord on every occasion strongly condemned it, either by plain declarations or by such parables as that of the rich man and Lazarus. The apostles were so far led astray by prevailing opinions that, when their Master remarked the difficulty, if not impossibility, of a rich man entering the kingdom of God, they asked in amazement, "Who then can be saved?" They did not yet understand that a man may possess great worldly wealth, and yet be poor and needy in spirit, like Abraham or David; in the infancy of their faith, they could not take in the whole of a spiritual truth at one glance.

339. Jesus again informed his disciples at this time of the sufferings that awaited him at Jerusalem; but they did not understand his meaning. They were amazed, probably, at the sorrow that they saw wringing his breast, but they were too full of the idea that he would immediately ascend the throne of Judea to be

[1] 1 Cor. vii.

deeply impressed by it. He had promised, indeed, in the conversation which followed the departure of the young ruler, that, in the regeneration, they would sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel; and, like the Hebrews generally, they paid more attention to their own pleasing fancies of outward greatness, than to their Master's declaration of approaching shame and death. Scripture furnishes another proof of that at this time, in the request of Salome and her two sons, that the latter might sit, one on the right hand, and the other on the left hand of Christ, in his kingdom. The ten were greatly displeased at James and John, as if they all really believed that Jesus would immediately ascend the throne of David, and dispense honours and offices, like an earthly sovereign. Our Lord had to check these ambitious and worldly views only a few hours before his death.

340. When Jesus reached Jericho on the road to Jerusalem, a great crowd of people, who were also hastening to the feast, had gathered round him. Two blind men were healed as he passed through that town;[1] and Zaccheus, a chief man among the publicans, entertained him in his house. Although the bigoted Jews murmured at the manner in which he countenanced this man, there is no reason for believing that Zaccheus was unjust in his dealings. The Pharisees in the crowd applied to him the usual character of the class to which he belonged; but, when he overheard their slanderous remarks, he declared, in the presence of Jesus, that, so far from acting unjustly in his ordinary calling, he gave the half of his goods to the poor, and restored fourfold in cases where he unknowingly overcharged the people. Our Lord knew the character of the man, and produced him, at that moment, to show that there were publicans whose righteous deeds were more deserving of praise than the tithing of mint and rue, or the long prayers and fastings of the conceited Pharisees. Not one of them gave half his goods to support the poor; and none would have restored more than one

[1] It is extremely difficult to reconcile the statements of the three evangelists on this miracle. Our knowledge of what took place, and of the locality, is defective.

and one-fifth fold, according to the strict letter of Jewish law. Jesus continued his progress towards Jerusalem after leaving Jericho, and arrived at Bethany on the Sabbath, six days before the Passover. The enmity of the rulers was not appeased; their boldness had increased by his retirement from Jerusalem; and, in proof of their resolution to act with vigour, they issued an order that if any one knew the place of his retreat, he should give information. Their pride and boldness were soon humbled.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCLUDING EVENTS OF OUR LORD'S PUBLIC MINISTRY.

	Matt.	Mark.	Luke.	John.
First day[1] *after reaching Jerusalem.*				
Triumphal entry into Jerusalem,	21. 1-17	11. 1-11	19. 29-44	12. 12-19
Second day.				
Barren fig-tree; cleansing of the temple,	21. 12, 13, 18, 19	11. 12-19	19. 45-48 21. 37, 38	
Third day.				
Fig-tree withers away,	21. 20-22	11. 20-26		
Christ's authority questioned; parables of the two sons, and of the wicked husbandmen,	21. 23-46	11. 27–12. 12	20. 1-19	
Parable of the marriage of the king's son,	22. 1-14			
On tribute to Cæsar (Pharisees),	22. 15-22	12. 13-17	20. 20-26	
On the resurrection (Sadducees),	22. 23-33	12. 18-27	20. 27-40	
On the two great commandments,	22. 34-40	12. 28-34		
On Christ being David's son,	22. 41-46	12. 35-37	20. 41-44	
Discourses on the Pharisees,	23. 1-39	12. 38-40	20. 45-47	
The widow's mite,		12. 41-44	21. 1-4	
The voice from heaven,				12. 20-50

[1] The Jewish day began at sunset; see Appendix.

	MATT.	MARK.	LUKE.	JOHN.
Discourses and parables on the coming of Christ—*Mount of Olives*,	24. 1–25. 46	13. 1-37	21. 5-36	
Fourth day.				
Conspiracy of the rulers; supper at Bethany; treachery of Judas,	26. 1-16	14. 1-11	22. 1-6	12. 2-8
Fifth day.				
Peter and John prepare the passover,	26. 17-19	14. 12-16	22. 7-13	
Sixth or Preparation day.				
Passover meal,	26. 20	14. 17	22. 14-18	
Contention for supremacy among the twelve,			22. 24-30	13. 1-20
Discovery of the traitor,	26. 21-25	14. 18-21	22. 21-23	13. 21-35
Fall of Peter foretold,	26. 31-35	14. 27-31	22. 31-38	13. 36-38
Lord's Supper instituted,[1]	26. 26-29	14. 22-25	22. 19, 20	
The Holy Spirit promised,				14. 1-31
The true vine; outpouring of the Spirit; the intercessory prayer,				15. 1–17. 26
Agony in Gethsemane,	26. 30, 36-46	14. 26, 32-42	22. 39-46	18. 1
Seizure of Jesus,	26. 47-56	14. 43-52	22. 47-53	18. 2-12
Jesus taken before Caiaphas,	26. 57, 58	14. 53, 54	22. 54	18. 13, 14, 24
Peter denies Christ,	26. 69-75	14. 66-72	22. 55-62	18. 15-18, 25-27
Jesus before the Sanhedrim,	26. 59-68	14. 55-65	22. 63-71	18. 19-24
Taken before Pilate,	27. 1, 2, 11-14	15. 1-5	23. 1-5	18. 28-38
Before Herod, and			23. 6-12	
Again before Pilate; Barabbas,	27. 15-26	15. 6-15	23. 13-25	18. 39, 40
Pilate condemns Jesus,	27. 26-30	15. 15-19		19. 1-3
Repentings of Pilate,				19. 4-16
Judas hangs himself,[2]	27. 3-10			

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 23-25.

[2] Acts i. 18, 19.

	Matt.	Mark.	Luke.	John.
The crucifixion, ...	27. 31-50	15. 20-37	23. 26-46	19. 16-30
Veil of the temple rent; judgment of the centurion; the women round the cross, ...	27. 51, 54-56	15. 38-41	23. 45, 47-49	
Burial of Jesus, ...	27. 57-61	15. 42-47	23. 50-56	19. 31-42
Sabbath.				
Watch set at the sepulchre, . .	27. 62-66			
The Lord's day.	28. 2-4	16. 1		
Flight of the watch, ...	28. 11-15			
Women at the sepulchre, . . .	28. 1	16. 2-4	24. 1-3	20. 1, 2
Angels seen in the sepulchre, .	28. 5-7	16. 5-7	24. 4-8	
Jesus appears to the women, .	28. 8-10	16. 8	24. 9-11	
Peter and John run to the grave,			24. 12	20. 3-10
Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene,		16. 9-11		20. 11-18
To Peter,[1] and to two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and . .		16. 12, 13	24. 13-35	
To ten of the apostles[1]—*Jerusalem*		16. 14-18	24. 36-49	20. 19-23
Resurrection of many saints, . .	27. 52, 53			
Next Lord's day.				
Jesus appears to the eleven[1]—*Jerusalem*, ...				20. 24-29
Interval between resurrection and ascension of Jesus—forty days,				
Jesus appears to the apostles—*Sea of Galilee*, ...	28. 16			21. 1-24
To apostles and brethren[1] in Galilee, ...	28. 16-20			
To James,[1] and the eleven[2]—*Jerusalem*, ...				
The ascension,[3]		16. 19-20	24. 50-53	
Conclusion of John's gospel, . .				21. 24-25

341. Experience might have taught the rulers to be cautious in allowing reports of their intentions against Christ to spread

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 5-7. [2] Acts i. 3-8. [3] Acts i. 9-12.

among the people; for every defeat they sustained weakened their hold upon the nation, and increased the popularity of Jesus. They were again committed by a public decree to take immediate steps against the Redeemer; they pretended to believe that he was a fugitive from justice, but he was approaching Jerusalem, attended by a great multitude of people of all ranks; and probably a much larger number were looking on, prepared to take a side, according to the course of events. On the day after Christ's arrival in Bethany (John), he proceeded towards the holy city; two disciples were sent to fetch an ass and its colt from a village, probably Bethphage, on the eastern slope of Olivet; and many of the people, informed of his coming, left Jerusalem to meet him. He intended, in fulfilment of prophecy,[1] to enter Jerusalem riding upon the colt of an ass. So great was the excitement, that his followers spread their garments in the way,[2] cut palm branches from the trees in token of his triumphal entrance into Zion, and cried, "Hosanna! Blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord!" From the brow of Mount Olivet, across which lay the road from Bethany, the fair city and its magnificent temple were seen spread out before the eye. In a few days Jesus would experience the agony of Gethsemane, be exposed to the brutalities of men in the streets of Zion, and die as if forsaken by God on Calvary; in a few years, armies would burn the city, slaughter the inhabitants, and not leave one stone standing on another; and at this glance into futurity, the Saviour burst into tears amid the rejoicings of his followers (Luke). The excitement was equally great in the streets; the whole city was moved; and people who could not see the Redeemer for the crowd, were told that the prophet of Nazareth was on his way to the temple (Matthew). The rulers were confounded by what they saw and heard; the world seemed to have gone after him (John). The blind and the lame were brought to the temple to be healed; and even little children were crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David" (Matthew). The humiliation of the wicked rulers was most complete; all

[1] Zech. ix. 9. [2] See 2 Kings ix. 13.

their schemes had been baffled; and Jesus, as if defying them to apprehend him, remained in the temple until evening, when he returned to Bethany.

342. On the second day of this eventful week, Jesus left Bethany for Jerusalem. When crossing Mount Olivet, where fruit-trees of various kinds were cultivated, he saw a fig-tree on which he expected to find figs. Although the season when green or untimely figs, as the first crop was called, might have been found on the tree, none had made their appearance. In the hearing of the disciples, Jesus said, "No man eat fruit of thee henceforth," and passed on towards the city. On entering the temple, he drove out of it a second time the merchants, by whose unhallowed traffic it was defiled; he taught the people that their rulers had made it a den of thieves; and the scribes and priests, though chafed at this plain speaking, and determined to put Jesus to death, were afraid to interfere. After teaching all day in the temple, he retired to the Mount of Olives, where he passed the night.

343. The third day of Christ's residence in Jerusalem was fruitful in stirring events. In the morning, the disciples remarked that the fig-tree had withered away (Mark); it began to wither as soon as Jesus pronounced the curse (Matthew); but the disciples did not observe the change at that time: our Lord founded an exhortation to prayer and faith on the incident. The rulers were now prepared to meet Christ in argument before the people. They were apparently waiting his arrival in the temple; and as soon as he appeared, they demanded what right he had to teach. Without denying their right to inquire, he requested them to satisfy him of their competency to judge in the matter, by proposing the question, Was John the Baptist a prophet? If they had said *no*, the people who were standing round might have stoned them; if they had said *yes*, Jesus would have appealed to the testimony of John concerning him; and they declined to answer. If they could not judge of John's claims, it was evident they were not competent to judge of those of Christ; but further to pour confusion on their pretensions, the Saviour

addressed to the bystanders the parables of the two sons and of the wicked husbandmen. So enraged were they at this result, that they made another ineffectual attempt to apprehend Christ.

344. But the rulers, though baffled in this instance, did not give up their endeavours to lower the Saviour in the estimation of the people by wresting his words. The younger members of the Pharisaic party were sent to ask him, as a Divine and independent teacher, whether or not it were lawful to pay tribute to the Romans? The question was evidently a set-off against that proposed by our Lord regarding John. If he said *no*, the rulers were prepared privately to accuse him of sedition and rebellion; if he said *yes*, the answer would be made public, and he would be charged with want of piety and patriotism in giving to man that lordship over the Holy Land, which was thought to belong only to God. Pointing to the image of the emperor on a Roman coin, which one of them produced, he bade them "render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's." Our Lord gave a very plain answer to a most insidious question: the people were looking on, wondering what he would say, or how he would escape the difficulty; and it was indispensable to give a reply, which the most illiterate would not only understand, but also bear in mind. The penny with Cæsar's image was a symbol of rights and privileges, enjoyed under the Roman government. Whatever might be the relation of the Hebrews to God, that penny, as the medium of commerce in the country, was a proof of the protection they received from Cæsar, and of the duties they owed him in return. The Sadducees next attempted to entangle Christ, by proposing what seems to have been one of their strongest and favourite arguments against the credibility of man's existence after death. Our Lord soon put them to silence, and followed up his victory by quoting the oft-repeated declaration, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob," and by inferring from it, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." It is certainly true that the Pentateuch, which was perhaps the only portion of Scripture that the Sadducees considered inspired,

contains other proofs of man's existence after death; but the words quoted by Christ occur so often, and stand out so prominently, that the application of them to the question under discussion was an overwhelming defeat. The Pharisees then renewed their attempts by putting forward a lawyer to question Jesus. It was done with an evil intention (Matthew); but, contrary to what usually happened on these occasions, the questioner confessed, "Master, thou hast well said," and Jesus commended him with, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God" (Mark).

345. The conflict of arguments between Jesus and the learned men of the nation was at an end; they had been vanquished on every occasion; their sophistries, however carefully prepared, had been laid bare or turned against themselves; and their plans to entrap the Redeemer, although matured by united counsels during several years, had all failed. Still further to convict them of ignorance, Jesus asked why they called Christ the Son of David, when David in Scripture calls him Lord,—a question which they were unable to answer. Before finally leaving the temple, he addressed the people on the evil example, the hypocrisy, the blindness, the injustice, and the cruelty of the Pharisees (Matthew); and, according to Mark and Luke, contrasted their ostentatious almsgiving with the mite, which a poor but liberal widow cast into the treasury-boxes of the temple. As the disciples were passing out of the temple, one of them called the attention of Jesus to magnificent buildings, which had probably been recently erected, when he foretold the speedy overthrow of the whole structure. They took the road to Bethany on the afternoon of this eventful day, but rested for a little on the slope of Olivet. As they sat on the ground, the Saviour pronounced several discourses on the terrible doom of Jerusalem, the events of the last judgment, and the necessity of watchfulness on the part of believers. It was also on this day, probably, that the voice from heaven bore testimony to Christ in the audience of the people; the bystanders supposed that it was thunder, or that an angel had spoken to him (John).

346. Our Lord spent the fourth day of the week at Bethany,

but important events then took place in Jerusalem. The rulers, aware of the popularity of Jesus, and afraid to apprehend him openly, resolved to seize him "by subtilty, and kill him;" no time was fixed, except that it was not to be on the feast-day. They were faltering in their purpose, when Judas suddenly appeared, and offered to deliver Christ quietly into their hands for a sum of money; the offer was immediately accepted, and the feast-day was probably fixed on as the most suitable time for his fulfilling the bargain. At a dinner in the house of Simon the leper in Bethany on the same day, Mary, the sister of Lazarus, anointed Jesus with very costly ointment; the disciples, at the instigation of Judas, condemned the supposed waste; and that traitor, estimating the value of the ointment at three hundred pence, regretted that the money was not paid over to him for the poor. Conscious of the crime that he had bargained to commit, he probably regarded the value of the ointment as so much that he might have appropriated to himself.

347. On the fifth day of the week, Jesus sent Peter and John into the city to prepare the passover; they were told to ask for the guest-chamber at a man whom they should find carrying a pitcher of water. As the upper room to which the man conducted them was "furnished and prepared," it is probable that our Lord had directed some attached follower to have it ready, and that the pitcher of water was the signal by which the two disciples would recognise him. According to the requirements of the law, Jesus arrived to eat the passover about sunset. Even at that solemn hour, when the Saviour's predictions of his sufferings and death were drawing near fulfilment, the twelve again contended for supremacy in the kingdom of Christ (Luke); their Master rebuked them, by performing the humble office of a servant, in washing their feet (John).

348. The events that took place at table on this occasion have been related with singular fulness by the apostle John. As the disciples were eating the paschal lamb, Jesus, with deep sorrow, declared that there was a traitor in the little company. Each man looked in amazement on his neighbour; and then,

conscious of innocence, asked, "Lord, is it I?" Silence on his part would have revealed the traitor, and Judas also put the question, "Is it I?" Jesus replied in an under-tone, "Thou hast said;" that is, *yes*. No one, except perhaps John, heard the answer; but at a sign from Peter, John whispered, "Who is it?" and the piece of bread or flesh which Christ then handed to Judas made him known to Peter also. The traitor immediately rose from table and went out, leaving the impression on the eleven that he had gone to make purchases for their use during the festival. Jesus breathed freely when the room was no longer polluted by the presence of the unhappy man; he intimated to the disciples that his death was at hand; and, though at first incredulous, their Master's repeated assertions of the fact at length produced conviction in their minds. Peter boldly expressed his resolution to die with him, but was told that he should deny him thrice before morning; the disciples even produced two swords, as if they expected a temporal kingdom or temporal enemies, and Peter secretly armed himself with one before leaving the house that night. When their minds had thus been prepared, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, and delivered those sublime discourses on union with himself and on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which are preserved in the Gospel of John (xv.-xvii.)

349. On leaving the house, they crossed the Cedron and entered the garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus often met with his disciples. An agony, which Scripture describes by the words "sore amazement" and "great heaviness," fell on the Redeemer when he reached that place; he retired into the recesses of the garden to pray, and Peter, James, and John were appointed to watch; they slept at their posts, but an angel appeared strengthening him; his prayers became "more earnest" as the heaviness increased, and "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood." At length the agony passed away, and he went forth to meet his human enemies: Judas knew where he and the disciples would be found, and torches were probably seen gleaming through the darkness of night. The leaders of the Jews wished to seize

Jesus without creating any tumult among the people, for they naturally feared that the attempt might be baffled, and that their own authority might be impaired. Our Lord's withdrawal to Gethsemane, where he was attended only by the eleven, enabled them to accomplish their object in the quietest way possible. The hardened traitor suddenly appeared about midnight, with a band of servants and Roman soldiers. Jesus had recovered from the mysterious agony which wrung his soul in that lonely place; the Divine majesty of his person compelled the servants and soldiers to fall to the ground before him; but unaffected by the homage they were forced to pay to Jesus, they seized him and led him away. Even at that moment the character of the Saviour shone brightly forth: his concern extended to the bodies as well as the souls of his disciples. Peter also still presented the same impulsive character as before: he was willing to die with his Master; he had armed himself with a sword, and boldly resisted the band, until commanded to desist.

350. John is the only one of the evangelists, who mentions the name of Annas in connexion with the seizure and trial of our Lord. Those who bribed Judas to betray his Master must have made some preparations for carrying out their wicked design; and though the apostle does not say why they led Christ to Annas first, that doubtless was one of the things previously agreed on. It is not likely that all, or even the larger number, of the Sanhedrim were aware of the bargain made with Judas, and of the plans for securing the death of Christ: there were too many reasons for apprehending a failure to intrust a number with the secret. Some time, therefore, would elapse before the Sanhedrim could assemble, and our Lord was kept in the palace of Annas till the members met in the house of Caiaphas the high priest (Luke). He was then brought before the council, and questioned concerning his followers and teaching. In the meantime, Peter and John had gained admission into the court of the high priest's palace, and were endeavouring to discover what was likely to befall their Master.[1] They had no grounds

[1] Matt. xxvi. 58.

for apprehending danger to themselves, as John was well known to the servants, and would not in that case have ventured among them; but, with that mischievous readiness to annoy the members of a party in disgrace which is common with the unthinking multitude, some people charged Peter, whose boldness made him prominent among the disciples, with being a follower of Christ. There are four different accounts of this affair; and as they seem contradictory in some respects, it will be advisable to present them in a tabular form. The three denials of Peter were made in the following circumstances :—

Matthew xxvi.	Mark xiv.	Luke xxii.	John xviii.
To a damsel that came unto him, 69, [in the court.]	To one of the maids of the high priest, who saw Peter warming himself, 66, 67.	To a certain maid, as he sat by the fire, 56.	To the damsel that kept the door, 17.
To another maid who saw him, and said unto them that were there, &c., 71.	To the maid who told the bystanders, &c., 69, [in the porch.]	To a man, 58.	To the bystanders, as he warmed himself, 25.
To the bystanders, "Thy speech bewrayeth thee," 73.	To the bystanders, "Thou art a Galilean," 70.	To a man, "He is a Galilean, he was with him," 59.	To a male servant, who charged him with being in the garden, 26.

351. Four independent witnesses will give different and yet true accounts of the same event, especially where there has been much disputing, and perhaps a number of people speaking at once. This took place in the present instance. First, the doorkeeper who let Peter into the court watched him until he sat down by the fire, and then charged him quietly with being a disciple of Christ; and in this way the four accounts perfectly agree. Next, the maid (Mark), or another maid (Matthew), recognising Peter, told the bystanders; and then the unhappy apostle, addressing some one in particular, who recognised him perhaps, or merely accused him, at the instance

of the maid-servant, with being a disciple, said, "Man, I am not." This took place in the porch or passage leading to the street, to which Peter retired when he saw that the servants knew him. Third, a kinsman of Malchus, according to John, accused him about an hour after; his Galilean accent, heard a little before in Gethsemane, was recognised by perhaps the same servant, according to Luke, and immediately the by-standers echoed the charge of being a Galilean, according to Matthew and Mark. There is thus no reason for supposing with some writers that any one of the evangelists has been guilty of mistakes in this matter. When many words passed between the disputants, and a number of charges were made, especially in a busy court, it is a mark of truth and independence that the brief narratives given in the Gospels differ, in some respects, from each other. Mark says that the cock crew a second time immediately after Peter's third denial of Christ; the other evangelists take notice of only one crowing.

352. While these things were taking place in the court, another scene was passing in the palace. Caiaphas, with those priests and scribes who had now assembled, was examining Christ concerning his followers and teaching, wishing most likely to draw from him something that might be twisted into an acknowledgment of guilt. Jesus, however, was brought before them as a criminal, not as one of whose claims they entertained any doubt, or about whom they wanted information; and, therefore, he reproved the high priest for not stating the charges on which he was arraigned, and producing witnesses to support them. A blow from one of the servants was the answer to this reproof. The Sanhedrim then proceeded to call witnesses against the Saviour, perhaps from the servants and others in the court; for the haste with which everything was done, the chances of failure, the want of agreement among the accusations, and the hour, render it unlikely that witnesses were prepared beforehand. Much time was spent in fruitless endeavours to find grounds of condemnation in the conflicting evidence, borne by people who only wished to please the rulers, without caring whether they

spoke truth or not. Jesus, the only calm spectator of these attempts to pervert justice, declined to plead. At length, towards morning, two charged him with having spoken against the temple,—a crime worthy of death according to Jewish prejudice; though even these did not agree in their evidence. The rulers knew that this was an unfounded charge; and, unable to succeed by other means, the high priest at last called on Jesus, in the name of God, to say whether he was Messiah. The question, as thus put by one who had the right to do so, and in a form which demanded a reply, was answered in the affirmative by our Lord, though not without a reproof of their mockery of justice,—"Though I say so, ye will not believe."[1] Jesus then contrasted his apparently helpless position, as a bound prisoner at that time, with the glory to which he should afterwards be raised.[2] Encouraged by this success, the members of the Sanhedrim then cried out, "Art thou the Son of God?" and when Jesus answered, "Ye say (truly) that I am," the high priest, with well-feigned hypocrisy, rent his clothes, and pronounced the Saviour worthy of death. But the Jews were forbidden by the Romans to carry sentence of death into effect; and the Sanhedrim required, therefore, to convince the Governor that Jesus deserved to die. The Redeemer was then exposed to the insolence and brutality of his guards; they covered his face, smote him with the palms of their hands, and said, "Prophesy, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?" A large number of members had now assembled; day was beginning to break, and rulers, servants, and the common rabble hurried Jesus through the streets of Jerusalem to the judgment-seat of Pilate. It was probably in passing out of the palace of Caiaphas that Christ cast a look of reproach and sorrow on Peter, who, following the crowd, left the scene of his unhappy fall, and wept bitterly.

353. A comparison of the accounts given in the four Gospels of our Lord's appearance before Pilate shows the indecent haste, the want of foresight, and the neglect of judicial forms that

[1] Luke xxii. 67. [2] Matt. xxvi. 63-65.

marked the conduct of the Jewish rulers. The hypocrites, who would not enter the hall of judgment, lest that might unfit them to eat the passover, did not scruple to demand from Pilate the death of the Redeemer, without accusation or proof (John). When their demand was refused, they charged Christ with preaching against paying tribute, and with setting himself up for a king (Luke). Pilate then examined Jesus on his claims to royalty; but finding that the kingdom which Christ claimed was the world of truth, and his subjects those who received his word, not fought for the freedom of his person, he saw at once that hatred and envy made the Jews anxious to rid themselves of Christ (John). Christ contrasted those that are of the truth with those that are of the world; and Pilate, a sceptic, as most Roman nobles then were, puzzled to know his meaning, asked of what truth he spake. But he had more serious things on hand than to gratify mere curiosity, and did not wait an answer. Matthew, Mark, and Luke give only the brief answer of "Thou sayest it," to the question of Pilate, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" Finding no fault in the Saviour, Pilate tried to pacify his accusers, but in vain: they became more fierce, and vehemently charged Jesus with disturbing the whole nation from Galilee to Judea. Learning that he belonged to Galilee, and desiring to escape from putting a guiltless person to death, the Governor sent him to Herod; and once more was Jesus hurried through the streets of Jerusalem with every mark of indignity. Herod was glad to see him, and expected some miracle to be wrought for his amusement; but Christ returned no answer to his inquiries and requests. Piqued at this, and encouraged by the malicious priests, Herod clothed him with a costly dress, treated him as an impostor, mocked at the royal dignity which he claimed, and then sent him back to Pilate as one who deserved chastisement, perhaps, for not humouring kings, but who had done nothing worthy of death. Luke, by whom this scene in the sad story is related, adds that Pilate and Herod, though formerly enemies, were made friends from that day. The Governor was in greater perplexity than ever; there was manifestly nothing blame-

worthy in Christ, and he proposed to release him, for it was usual to gratify the people by setting some prisoner at liberty every passover. But the rulers asked for the release of a notorious person named Barabbas, who had been guilty of robbery and murder during one of those seditions which were not uncommon in Jerusalem, and Pilate was compelled to grant their request. His difficulties thickened: his wife, whom tradition names Claudia Procula, sent him a message to do nothing against Christ, in consequence of a dream which had disturbed her overnight (Matthew): the cries of the multitude for Christ's death became more loud and frequent, and he had great reason to fear a popular outbreak, which might be attended with serious consequences. Unhappy man! he thought that washing his hands in water, and laying the sin on the people, would excuse him for delivering Christ to their will; but, even after scourging Christ and allowing the soldiers to mock him, he wavered and endeavoured to excite pity for the innocent and suffering prisoner among the people. He brought him forward in public, according to the Gospel of John, with a crown of thorns which the soldiers had put on his head, and a gorgeous robe which they had thrown on him in mockery. The sight of his lowliness and suffering had a very different effect upon the Jewish rulers from what Pilate expected. Jesus had called himself Son of God; he had spoken of the honours of the Eternal as being his by nature; and was it right that the mocked and wretched prisoner, who had made these lofty claims, should escape unpunished? Pilate again affirmed the innocence of the accused; but the helplessness and sufferings of Christ emboldened the priests to exclaim that he made himself Son of God, and by their law such blasphemy deserved death. This new charge, however, terrified the Governor more than ever. The distress of his wife, the calmness and extraordinary conduct of the accused, and the utter want of any crime, led him to fear that Christ might be after all what the Jewish rulers called it blasphemy to affirm; and another examination in the judgment-hall took place. Jesus at first refused to answer a man who was bent on putting him to death,

but at length he rebuked him for impiety. Pilate claimed the right to release Jesus or put him to death, as if there were no God to whom he was responsible for the exercise of his power. Christ excused this ignorance in the foolish heathen, and laid the blame on those whose laws told them very plainly the danger of an unjust sentence. Pilate was now even more eager than before to deliver Jesus from the priests and rabble; but when threatened with a prosecution before the emperor for misconduct, and perhaps high treason, if he refused to punish this pretender to royalty, the little moral courage that he possessed gave way. Disregard of justice and want of moral courage are usually associated with meanness of conduct and littleness of mind. Pilate was not an exception. Afraid to refuse the Jews a most unjust request, he had the meanness to cast on them taunts which they certainly did not deserve. Christ was once more exposed to public view; the Governor, in mockery of their subjection to Rome, called on the excited priests and mob to behold their king, but they exclaimed, "To the cross with him! we have no king but Cæsar."

354. It was the third hour, according to Mark, before Pilate delivered up Jesus to the will of the Jews: the trial, if it deserves that name, had lasted from dawn; and it is singular that throughout the chief priests and scribes were the leaders of a mob, which at one time threatened to break out in open sedition. The coolness which these same men displayed on other occasions, and their well-grounded fears of seditious tumults, form a striking contrast to their conduct in the present instance. They acted like those who knew that, unless they improved the opportunity of putting Jesus to death, they might never have another. In the first outbreaks of popular fury, the well-disposed are thrust into the background; when its rage is spent, they resume their proper place and power. It was so in the seizure and death of the Saviour; for three years, fear of the people had kept back the rulers from slaying Christ; and if they had not seized the present opportunity, the same fear would have continued to restrain them. Their haste, their want of dignity and

foresight, their unpreparedness, and the unseemly eagerness with which they put themselves forward as the leaders of their own servants, as well as of the mob, which is always ready to join what seems the winning party, prove that they were fully alive to the great probability of failure in their undertaking. At the same time, the hour had come of which the Saviour had often spoken: however man might reason or plan in the matter, the decree had gone forth that Jesus should now die for the sins of his people.

355. After Pilate decided to grant the request of the Jewish rulers, the soldiers led Jesus and two thieves out of the city to Golgotha or Calvary, a rising ground perhaps, where it was usual to crucify criminals, and where the skulls that were lying about betokened the purpose to which the place was set apart. A great crowd of men and women followed them through the streets, for the city was thronged with persons who had come up to the Passover, if indeed they had not accompanied Jesus from Peræa a few days before, and seen the miracles which he wrought. The women especially, loudly expressed their grief, and appear to have even forced themselves through the guard of soldiers and servants, for Christ addressed them in a few words of warning and pity on the approaching downfall of Jerusalem (Luke). On the road to Golgotha, the soldiers seized a man named Simon as he was returning from the country, and made him bear the cross of Christ; whether they feared Jesus would faint under the load, or whether Simon by words or looks expressed his sorrow and anger at a scene for which he was unprepared. Arrived at Calvary, the soldiers offered him a mixture of vinegar and gall, which was usually given to deaden the sensibilities of the condemned, but the Saviour refused it; in this very act they mocked him.[1] Even when nailing him to the cross his enemies were the subjects of his prayers—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke). The four soldiers, to whom the charge of the execution was specially committed, then divided his garments among them by lot;[2] the

[1] Luke xxiii. 36; Ps. lxix. 21.

[2] Ps. xxii. 18.

crowds which followed him through the streets were in a great measure silent spectators of these events—"they stood beholding" (Luke); the high priests and scribes, whom nothing but unbounded joy at their success could have brought to the spot, began the mockery with which they thought to embitter the last hours of Jesus; and the soldiery, imitating their superiors, ran up to the cross asking the king of the Jews to partake of vinegar, or sour wine, which they used as an ordinary beverage. Pilate placed upon his cross the title, "King of the Jews," the crime with which the high priests charged him, and an honour of which as Messiah he was the rightful possessor. The Jewish rulers pleaded in vain with the governor to alter it; glad of an opportunity to annoy them, he haughtily refused. Even the thieves who were crucified with him joined in the general mockery: truly it was the hour and power of darkness, when men, in intense pain themselves, could forget their own shame and agony to reproach a fellow-sufferer who had never done them wrong. For about six hours Jesus was exposed to these trials and sorrows; but even then he was not without proofs of his dignity. One of the thieves repented, and was forgiven; darkness covered the face of nature for three hours after midday; and a faithful band of followers watched round his cross, or waited at a distance. Inspiration has not made known through what struggles he passed during this season of suffering and shame, but certainly bodily pain was the least of them. When he cried out, "My God," &c., some Jews, perhaps servants of the high priest (mistaking the word Eloi, my God, for Eli, Elias), thought that he called on the prophet for help; so greatly did they fear, from what they had seen and heard, that Jesus might be Messiah after all. Even in that dark hour his confidence in God was not shaken—"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," were among his last words. God had withdrawn, but the Saviour trusted in him who could deliver from death. The bodily agony of the Redeemer forced him to exclaim in his last moments, "I thirst," when the soldiers, filling a sponge with vinegar, put it to his mouth. On

the previous night he had said in prayer, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do;" and now, when breathing his last on the cross, and with his mind full of the struggle through which he had passed, he cried, "It is finished," and expired.

356. The repentance and suicide of Judas probably preceded the crucifixion of the Saviour. That unhappy man presented himself before the chief priests and elders after they had obtained the condemnation of Jesus; he threw on the ground before them the money with which he was bribed, and went and hanged himself (Matthew). Luke adds that he "burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out." The rulers bought "the potter's field to bury strangers in" with the money; but as the silver belonged to Judas, Peter represents him as the purchaser of the ground.

357. A number of striking events followed the death of the Redeemer; the veil of the temple was rent in twain; many saints afterwards arose from their graves; the earth quaked; the rocks rent; and the centurion in command of the soldiers at the cross was so astonished at what he saw, that he acknowledged his belief in the truth of the charge on which Jesus was put to death, "This man was the Son of God." The sixth day of the week was now drawing to a close; Sabbath would begin at sunset, and the Jews were anxious to have the bodies of the condemned taken down from the cross before evening. So far as Jesus was concerned, their wishes were perhaps anticipated by Joseph of Arimathea, who received permission from Pilate to remove the dead body. Nicodemus assisted him to pay the last sad duties to their beloved Master; they anointed the body with myrrh and spices provided by Nicodemus, and laid it in a rock-tomb belonging to Joseph, at a little distance from the city. The faithful women, who ministered to the wants of Jesus while he lived, followed the body to the grave, and agreed to meet at the sepulchre on the morning after the Sabbath, that they might perform those sad offices to the dead, which the hurry of the

[1] Acts i. 18.

interment forced them to omit. Matthew ends his account of the crucifixion, by relating that the rulers persuaded Pilate to set a guard of soldiers over the sepulchre, lest the disciples should steal the body and say he rose from the dead; a delusion of this kind spreading among the people would, in their estimation, prove more serious than the pretensions of the deceiver himself.

358. The watch, which the suspicions of the rulers induced Pilate to set on the Sabbath, fled from their post that night, terrified by a great earthquake, and by the sudden appearance of the angel of Jehovah. When the women[1] reached the tomb before dawn, they found the stone that covered its mouth rolled away, and the sepulchre empty. Mary Magdalene immediately left to inform the disciples of this strange circumstance (John); the other women remained at the grave, and, on entering it again, saw two angels clothed in shining garments sitting where the body had lain. These heavenly messengers told them to inform the apostles, that Jesus was risen from the grave, and would see them in Galilee. The women fled from the place in terror and joy, and, on the road to the city, saw the Saviour himself; but though a number of them testified to the same thing, the apostles treated their report as an idle tale. In the meantime, Peter and John had seen Mary and gone to the sepulchre; they were surprised at the order with which the grave-clothes were folded up and laid on the ground; and the conviction was forced on their minds that Jesus had risen from the dead. Mary followed them to the grave, and remained after they left. Weeping at the thought of fancied indignities heaped on the body by the wicked rulers, she looked into the sepulchre and saw two angels; turning suddenly round, to flee perhaps, or alarmed by a noise behind her, she saw the Redeemer himself, and received a commission to his brethren.[2] While these

[1] They could not have known about the guard, otherwise they would not have ventured near the grave.

[2] Mark says that Mary saw the Redeemer first after his resurrection; but it is doubtful whether he means *first, before all others*, or *first of the three appearances recorded in his Gospel.*

events were taking place, some of the soldiers had reached the city, and reported the cause of their flight to the chief priests. They were bribed to say that the eleven stole away the body by night while they were asleep ; and that story became current in Judea; although the severity of military discipline in all nations, but especially among the Romans, sufficiently proves its falsehood.—(Acts xii. 19.)

359. On the afternoon of the same day, Jesus appeared to Peter ; but neither Luke nor Paul, both of whom mention the occurrence, has related what passed at the interview. About the same time, he overtook two of his followers, who were not apostles, on the road to Emmaus, and entered into conversation with them as a stranger and a fellow-traveller. He maintained this disguise until they sat down to supper in a house in Emmaus ; when, suddenly revealing himself, he vanished out of their sight. Although it was nearly sunset, they immediately returned to Jerusalem, and reported the interview to the disciples. As they were speaking, Jesus himself suddenly appeared in the room with the salutation, "Peace be unto you;" they thought he was a spirit; but he reassured them by pointing to the nail and spear marks in his body, and by eating food which they gave him. A renewal of their commission to preach the gospel and work miracles among all nations was then given ; and he breathed on them, in token of his purpose to send the Holy Ghost at the promised time. Thomas was absent on this occasion, and strongly expressed his doubts of the reality of the resurrection of Jesus; but, on the following Lord's day, when all the disciples were assembled, Jesus again appeared, and reproved the unreasonable conduct of his follower. Another interview with the apostles took place after this at the Sea of Galilee; it was the third with which they had been favoured, but the seventh appearance of Jesus since his resurrection. The thrice repeated question of Jesus at that time, "Peter, lovest thou me more than these?" taught the apostle that his three denials of the Saviour were forgiven, while it also warned him against indulging the idea that he surpassed his fellow

apostles in love to Christ. Another, and a very solemn appearance of Jesus, seems to have been made on a mountain in Galilee (Matthew). Probably the Redeemer met there the five hundred brethren alluded to by the apostle Paul,[1] for Matthew says "some doubted," which can scarcely apply to the eleven. The evidence for the resurrection of Christ is thus, to use the language of Scripture, infallible; the opportunities which believers enjoyed of testing the reality of the event, for forty days after it took place, were so numerous and varied, that they cheerfully laid down their lives rather than deny it; and though all the proofs which they received have not reached our time, it is an unquestionable fact, that history knows of no event, in support of which a greater body of clear and convincing evidence can be brought forward, than the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead on the third day after his interment.

360. The gospel history closes with a brief account of the ascension of the Saviour into heaven, to sit on the right hand of God. That event took place on Mount Olivet, in the neighbourhood of Bethany; "while he blessed his disciples, he was parted from them . . . . and a cloud received him out of their sight." As they gazed after their Master, two angels appeared, who assured them that Jesus should come again in like manner as they had seen him go. The resemblance consisted in his "coming with the clouds of heaven." Wherever our Lord's second coming is mentioned, clouds are always introduced as forming a chariot of glory for him. The descriptions of this event given in Scripture seldom represent him attended by angels, though to our minds these glorious beings seem fitter and more terrible attendants of the King of kings than the clouds of heaven. Angels are not mentioned, however, because the glory and greatness of Christ cannot be enhanced by having them around him: his splendours will obscure their brightness, and render their presence unmarked. But why are clouds introduced? Daniel represents the Son of Man brought before the Ancient of Days in the clouds of heaven—moving swiftly and terribly along,

[1] 1 Cor xv. 6.

or suddenly increasing from the size of a man's hand till the whole sky is overspread. Paul says that Christ shall come "in flaming fire, taking vengeance on his enemies,"[1] that is, attended by thunder clouds, and heralded by lightning. In other words, clouds are taken to symbolize the swiftness and suddenness of his coming, and the glory of God with which he shall be clothed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BAPTISM OF THE JEWS WITH THE HOLY GHOST.

361. The Acts of the Apostles, like the book of Genesis, is not a regular history, but a series of biographies. A common promise and a common faith in the true God bind together the various events in the lives of the Patriarchs: the fulfilment of that promise, and the same faith, form the bond of union which runs through the Acts of the Apostles. In Genesis the development of the promise is slow and uncertain; and the inward life of the Patriarchs is narrated with much less fulness than the history of their wanderings, of their families, their flocks and herds. In the Acts, on the contrary, prominence is given to the life of faith, and the personal history of the apostles and evangelists is kept in the background.

362. The subject treated of in the Acts is "the baptism of the Church with the Holy Ghost:" and this is naturally divided into two parts. (1.) The baptism of the Jewish, and (2.) The baptism of the Gentile Church. The Gospel narrates what Christ "began to do" on earth: the Acts, what he continues to do in heaven. Luke dedicated this book, as well as his Gospel, to Theophilus; and the former is properly only a continuation of the latter. The time and place of its composition are

[1] 2 Thess. i. 8.

unknown. As it concludes somewhat abruptly with an account of Paul's imprisonment for "two whole years," there is good reason to believe that it was written shortly before his liberation from prison. Some suppose that Luke composed it at Rome; others, at Antioch: but it is not probable that the evangelist was then at Rome. So long as he is the companion of Paul, his notes of the sermons and journeys of the apostle are very full; but they become meagre when he requires to separate from him. Judging, therefore, from Acts xxviii. 30, 31, it is very probable that Luke was not in Paul's company when he wrote these verses. Antioch, therefore, the place fixed on by ancient tradition, may be regarded as the city where the book of the Acts was written.

363. It is both important and difficult to settle the chronology of the events recorded in the Acts. Some facts occur in the history, which are also mentioned by profane authors; the latter give the dates of these events, and a few points are thus obtained from which we may reckon backwards and forwards in the inspired record. Even with this assistance, uniformity in the dates of events mentioned in the Acts is far from having been attained among commentators. The first of these points of contact with profane history are the famine that happened in the reign of Claudius (xi. 28), and the death of Herod (xii.), in A.D. 44. The expulsion of the Jews from Rome, referred to in Acts xviii. 2, is known to have taken place in A.D. 52; and the appointment of Porcius Festus to the procuratorship of Judea in A.D. 60. These fixed points, although there is some uncertainty even about them, are of the utmost consequence to the biblical student; but they are not sufficient to determine with accuracy the dates of all the events recorded in the Acts: there is still much room for mere guessing. (See § 415.)

364. Ten days elapsed between the ascension of Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit: the interval was spent by believers, of whom the number amounted to 120, in religious exercises, and in preparation for receiving the fulfilment of their Master's promise. Even the most advanced of the apostles en-

tertained crude and vague ideas of what was about to happen; for a temporal kingdom was floating before their minds, when they saw the Saviour ascending into heaven.[1] Among the events which occurred during these ten days, one is particularly mentioned, the election of Matthias. Peter, forward as usual, proposed to the disciples the appointment of a successor to Judas. He showed that the fate of that apostate had been foretold in the Psalms; and stated the qualifications of an apostle in the words of the Saviour, "to be a witness of his resurrection," and of all things that Christ did from the beginning of his ministry.[2] It will be observed, that Peter proves from Scripture that a successor would be appointed to Judas; but the Spirit was not yet poured out, and it may be questioned whether they were then entitled to elect an apostle.—(Acts i.)

365. At length the day of Pentecost came, and the promise was fulfilled: the real change that took place in the apostles was a change of mind; the scales fell from their eyes, and they saw clearly Christ's person and work. External signs accompanied this inward enlightenment,—a strong wind, tongues of fire, and the power of speaking in other languages.[3] Miracles had been already wrought by the apostles, but the gift was now renewed. Great numbers of devout strangers and natives of Jerusalem, drawn to the place where the disciples were assembled, were astonished to hear Galileans, whom they were taught to despise, speaking all the languages of the world; but many regarded the scene as a drunken debauch. Peter addressed the onlookers, confining himself chiefly to the men of Judea and Jerusalem. He declared, *first*, that they were contemplating the fulfilment of an ancient prophecy by Joel (ii. 14-21); he appealed, *second*, to the well-known facts that Jesus, in whose name they were assembled, was approved of God by many miracles, and had been raised from the dead (22-24). *Third*, he showed that David prophesied of some one, that he would not see corruption; he himself died and was buried; and the prediction could refer only to his descendant, Jesus, who rose from

[1] Acts i. 6. [2] John xv. 27. [3] Gen. xi. 1-9.

the dead, as Peter and those with him could testify (25-32). *Lastly*, he ascribed the wonder, which was exciting their astonishment, to Jesus, and called upon all to acknowledge him as "Lord (Jehovah) and Christ (Messiah)." This appeal to fact and prophecy, seconded by the working of the Spirit, was the means of converting about 3000 persons: many of them were not natives of Judea, and thus the Gospel spread to other parts of the world among the Jews.—(Acts ii.)

366. The state of the infant church at this time is briefly but vividly described: its members received the word of truth from the apostles without doubting, and were firmly united in the bonds of the same faith. The warmest love prevailed in consequence among them; while respect (fear) for the apostles was maintained in the church by the numerous miracles which they were enabled to work, and by the power with which they swayed the minds of men. Many members were extremely poor, cut off from their former supplies by adhesion to the cause of Christ. As they were entitled to expect support from the apostles, some of the wealthier members sold "goods and lands" to supply their wants, or threw their houses open to receive them. Such self-denial might have been expected, especially as it had been recommended by the Saviour. Only two instances are mentioned in which possessions were sold by believers, but the language used implies that the practice was very common,—"As many as were possessors of houses or lands sold them." Owners of property, however, although members of the Church, were not required to sell it: the proceeding was entirely voluntary, and the money laid at the apostles' feet was reckoned a freewill-offering, which a person was neither compelled nor expected to make. A community of goods, in which no one could call anything his own, is therefore not implied in the words, "They had all things common;" for Peter says expressly, that those who sold land might have kept the price to themselves, had they chosen to do so: the words simply mean, that believers regarded themselves as members of one body, and bound to supply the wants of their destitute brethren. The dis-

ciples spent their days in religious exercises, meeting in the temple or in private houses. At the same time, they still worshipped in the synagogues on the Sabbath.

367. Of the many miracles wrought by the apostles at this time only two are recorded by the evangelist, the healing of the lame man, and the death of Ananias and his wife. The former is remarkable from the fact that the unfortunate man, who was at least forty years old, had long sat at a gate of the temple, through which our Lord must have repeatedly passed while on earth. Numbers of people soon gathered round Peter and John when they saw the lame man walking between them, and Peter seized the opportunity to address the crowd. He appealed to the facts that they had killed Jesus, the Holy One and the Just, and the Prince of Life; that he had risen from the dead, and that faith in him had given strength to the lame man. He then urged repentance upon them that their sins might be blotted out at the general judgment, or in the times of refreshing and restitution of all things. Next he quoted Moses and all the prophets to show that a Saviour was promised, whom the chosen people were commanded to receive and obey. In dealing with the Jews, the apostles adopted the following plan:—They proved from Scripture that a prophet, Messiah, or a Redeemer, was promised; they then appealed to well-known facts, the miracles and teaching of Christ, his life and resurrection proving the truth of his claim to Messiahship; and they concluded by exhorting the people to repentance and faith. Peter's address on this occasion was the means of adding a considerable number to the church, for the number of male members alone now reached 5000.—(Acts iii.)

368. The preaching of Jesus and the resurrection excited the anger of several members of the Sadducean party. Peter and John were therefore seized by the Levitical guard in the evening, and confined in prison till next day. When brought before the high priest and several of his relations, they boldly asserted that Jesus was risen from the dead and had wrought the miracle. Their judges examined them on their knowledge of rabbinical learning, but found them entirely ignorant of it: some one re-

membered, however, that they had been seen with Jesus. After attempting to silence them by threats, the Sadducees dismissed them; for the people did not conceal their sympathies with the apostles, and the rulers were therefore afraid to proceed against them. Great joy was diffused throughout the church by the courage with which Peter and John acted, and by the inability of the rulers to deny their statements or injure their persons. Its members prayed for an increase of faith, and an earthquake or shaking of the place of meeting, with a fresh outpouring of the Holy Ghost, was the answer given.—(Acts iv.)

369. The second miracle narrated by the evangelist shows that, even at this period of purity and prosperity, worldly elements had found an entrance into the church. The tares were growing up with the wheat, just as among the twelve apostles one was a traitor. Joses or Barnabas and Ananias appear to have joined the church at this time; and a contrast is drawn between them. Both manifested their faith and love by selling their possessions; but how different were their ends! Barnabas became a distinguished evangelist; Ananias and his wife perished in an attempt to deceive the Holy Ghost. Their sin resembled that of their ancestors during the sojourn in the wilderness. The latter pretended to honour Jehovah, but refused to respect Moses: the former pretended to worship God, and tried to deceive Peter. Clearer evidence could not be given that God dwelt in both these men; and death was the punishment of the hardened sinners.—(Acts v. 1-11.)

370. The preaching and miracles of the apostles gained them so many adherents, and created such a sensation in the city, that the Sadducees especially resolved to put down this new sect. Accordingly, the apostles were committed to the public prison, and the Sanhedrim assembled next day to examine the matter: but an unseen hand had opened the prison doors by night, and the apostles were found teaching in the temple. Officers were sent to seize them, but the miracle had spread among the people, and there was some danger of an attempt to rescue the twelve. The Sanhedrim regarded Christ as legally put to death: the apostles

charged that court before the people with having murdered Messiah, although the rulers had forbidden them to use such language. They repeated the accusation, however, in still stronger terms, alleging, at the same time, that Jesus was at God's right hand, a Prince and a Saviour. There was some talk among the violent members of putting them to death; but Gamaliel recommended delay: the excitement might subside if the leaders were let alone, as they had seen in other instances, or the new faith might prove to be from God. In either case violent measures were dangerous. His advice was followed, and the apostles were scourged and then dismissed. The proceedings of the Sanhedrim were ruinous to the cause of Judaism: that court was manifestly afraid of the apostles, and waverers always join the stronger or the rising party. An increase in the numbers and boldness of church members was the result.—(Acts v. 12-42.)

371. A change in the constitution of the church took place about this time. The Grecians, that is Jews born out of Palestine, were displeased at the neglect with which their widows were treated in the distribution of alms, and at the preference given to those who belonged to Judea or Jerusalem. As the apostles probably attended to this matter, either personally or by deputies whose election is not recorded, the charge of partiality fell on them; and the members of the church were therefore called upon to choose seven persons, on whom the duty of "serving tables" might be laid. Stephen and six others, whose Greek names perhaps imply a Grecian origin, and one of whom was a proselyte from Antioch, were appointed to the office. The apostles laid their hands on them, and the Holy Ghost was bestowed upon them. They distributed alms; and when occasion offered, maintained the truth of Christ against the Jews, and also wrought miracles; but they did not impart the Holy Ghost. It was usual with believers to worship in the temple and synagogues: their numbers had so greatly increased, even among the priests, that there was scarcely a synagogue in Jerusalem where some of them might not be found. A fierce dispute took place between Stephen and the members of the synagogue where

natives of Cyrene, Cilicia, and other places, worshipped. Saul probably met along with his fellow-townsmen of Tarsus in that synagogue, and there is little doubt that he would be one of Stephen's chief opponents. Stephen had preached the same doctrines which Saul afterwards passed his life in maintaining against the Jews; but at that time they seemed blasphemy, and he or his fellow-worshippers urged a furious mob to drag Stephen before the council. The opportunity had come for which the high priest and his friends had long been waiting: the mob was now excited against believers.—(Acts vi.)

372. Stephen was charged with having said (1.) that Jesus would destroy the temple, and (2.) that he would change the customs of Moses.[1] He was allowed to defend himself, and the speech he delivered can only be understood by bearing in mind the accusations brought against him. He began with making a confession of his faith, which the impatience and rancour of his enemies did not allow him to finish. Instead of regarding the Mosaic laws with contempt, as they affirmed, he held Moses and his institutions in the highest honour. In the first part of his address (vii. 1-19), he traced the history of the promise to the settlement of the Hebrews in Egypt. The second part (20-43) contains a sketch of the life of Moses, and the building of the tabernacle. Stephen, after thus showing the high respect he entertained for Moses and the patriarchs, approached the first charge brought against him—that Jesus would destroy the temple. His argument is twofold: (1.) Moses built a tabernacle, but that was done away when the temple was built by Solomon; might the prophet promised by Moses not do away with the temple also? and (2.) Scripture expressly says, that the Most High does not dwell in temples; what harm, therefore, in thinking lightly of the temple (44-50)? Stephen, however, was not allowed to finish these arguments: murmurs arose among the audience, and the speaker was prevented from proceeding. In-

[1] Compare with this story that in Jeremiah xxvi. The prophet foretold that the temple would be made like Shiloh, and that Zion would become a *curse* to all nations. He was tried before the princes, but escaped.

dignant at the conduct of men who pretended to be his judges, and yet refused him a fair hearing, his tone and manner suddenly changed. Abandoning all thought of arguing with those whose minds were made up to condemn him, he boldly charged them with murdering the prophets, killing the Messiah, and breaking the law which they pretended to honour (51-53). A riot was the immediate result, and Stephen was stoned to death by a seditious mob.—(Acts vii.)

373. The defence of Stephen presents some points of interest in the references that he made to Jewish tradition : perhaps it contains more opinions of the Rabbins than all the rest of the New Testament together. The first thing deserving notice is, "And from Charran, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land" (vii. 4). But the narrative in Genesis proves beyond a doubt that Terah, Abraham's father, survived the departure of his son from Haran for perhaps sixty years. The Jewish Rabbins, however, supposed that Terah fell into idolatry, which compelled Abraham to leave him; and they regarded Terah as *dead in idolatry* or *sin*, when his son removed to Palestine. This explains the statement of Stephen : he was using language with which his hearers were quite familiar. The second point worthy of notice is in verse 14 : "Jacob and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls." Only seventy persons are mentioned in the Old Testament;[1] but an old tradition was preserved among the Jews, which made up the number to seventy-five, by adding the grandchildren of Joseph. In that case Stephen gives, not the number of Jacob's descendants who went down to Egypt, but his whole posterity. Again, we read in verse 16 : "The patriarchs were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem." Scripture has preserved no account of the burying-place of any of Jacob's sons except Joseph;[2] but a tradition existed among the Jews that they were buried with Joseph in Shechem. It appears further from Genesis, that Jacob, and not Abraham, bought the piece of ground in which this

[1] Gen. xlvi. 27; Exod. i. 5; Deut. x 22. [2] Josh. xxiv. 32.

burial-cave was situated; and commentators are at a loss how to explain the statement of Stephen. Tradition is silent on the subject. Another tradition embodied in the defence of Stephen is: "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds," *i.e.*, prudent (not eloquent) and powerful. The Rabbins and Josephus relate many stories of his prowess in leading the armies of Egypt, and the prudence with which his arrangements were made for insuring success; but the statements of Stephen, however, may be fairly inferred from the narrative in Exodus. The division of Moses' life into three periods of forty years each, is found only in this speech of Stephen, and in the traditions of Jewish Rabbins: he showed his accusers that he was well acquainted with the traditions of the elders, which they counted of more consequence than Scripture itself. Stephen also represents Moses as acting from a Divine impulse in slaying the Egyptian; but there is no mention of this in the Pentateuch. We meet with the same view in the writings of the apostle Paul—"Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt."[1]

374. The death of Stephen gave rise to a fierce persecution of believers, in which Saul took the lead. He obtained writs from the high priest empowering him to commit both men and women to prison, and allowing him to bring them bound from the cities and villages in the neighbourhood to Jerusalem. The towns of Samaria and Galilee, where the preaching of our Lord had prepared men for the labours of his disciples, were also visited by this furious persecutor. Private houses were entered, and the synagogues visited, in search of believers. The apostles alone were exempted from persecution, for the boldest enemies of the church were afraid to touch these holy men. Believers were shut up in prison, scourged, and even put to death.[2] They were offered life and liberty on condition of blaspheming the name of Jesus; and not a few yielded to their fears.[2] Saul never forgot

[1] Stephen also quoted from Amos v. 25, 26, information regarding the idolatry of the Hebrews in the wilderness, which is not contained in the Pentateuch.

[2] Acts xxvi. 10, 11.

the active part he took in these proceedings: to the end of his life he remembered his conduct with regret and sorrow.[1]—(Acts viii. 1-3.)

375. The persecution was attended with good; for believers were driven from Jerusalem to other cities, and the seed of the word was thus scattered abroad over Palestine. Jesus usually visited Jerusalem at the annual feasts, and spent the rest of the year in moving from place to place: the apostles confined themselves too exclusively to Jerusalem. Their commission extended to the Samaritans and Gentiles, but they seemed unwilling to carry their labours beyond Judea, until the Head of the Church compelled them. Samaria and the surrounding villages received the gospel from Philip, who baptized great numbers of the inhabitants. Among those who professed faith in Christ was a person named Simon. By trickery and imposture he had persuaded the people that he was possessed of Divine attributes; and the name by which he went was "the power of God." He also was baptized. When Peter and John arrived in Samaria to bestow the Holy Ghost on the new converts, Simon was greatly surprised at the effect produced by the laying on of their hands. He wished to purchase this gift from the apostles for himself, and the power of bestowing it on others. Peter, far from visiting him with the penalty of Ananias, declared that he was the bond-slave of Satan, and had drunk of the poison (gall of bitterness) of that deceiver, and urged him to repent. This exhortation had no effect upon the magician, for he is said to have removed to Rome, and practised his unhallowed arts in that city. Philip made another convert at this time in the person of a eunuch or officer of high rank from Ethiopia (probably Meroë, an island in the Nile). He was either a Jew or a proselyte, and had been worshipping at Jerusalem. Ancient tradition reports, that he established the gospel in his native country.—(Acts viii. 4-40.)

376. Before closing this chapter, let us consider the nature of the apostles' preaching to the Jews. They insisted, in the first place, on the fact, which they proved by quotations from

[1] 1 Tim. i. 12, 13; Acts xxvi. 9-11.

all parts of the Old Testament, that a Saviour, Messiah, was promised to the fathers. In the next place, they advanced the claims of Jesus to this dignity, and established their truth by comparing prophecy and facts. Moses had laid down the rule, that a prophet who wrought miracles, and taught doctrines consistent with the law, was a true prophet; and the apostles maintained that, as Jesus performed many miracles, and as his teaching was in strict accordance with the law, every statement he made should be received without hesitation. Their hearers had enjoyed so many opportunities of seeing Jesus working miracles, and of hearing him preach, that the truth of what the apostles said could not be questioned. The apostles also brought hundreds of witnesses to prove that Jesus had risen from the dead, after having been buried; and they showed from prophecy that this had been foretold of the Messiah. When facts and prophecy were thus put together, they were found to agree most remarkably in the person of Jesus; and faith in him as Messiah was therefore demanded from the Jews. Believers still observed the rites of the Mosaic law, though the belief was slowly gaining strength that these were abolished. Faith in Jesus was added to their Judaism, and left to work out a purer system in course of time; but, besides faith, repentance was also demanded. The new system required a change of heart,—it took hold of the whole man; Judaism was content with externals; but the demand for repentance, and such examples as those of Ananias and Sapphira, showed that a new heart was indispensable if one wished to become a member of the Church.

CHAPTER XIX.

BAPTISM OF THE GENTILES WITH THE HOLY GHOST.

377. The visit of Peter and John to Samaria broke the spell which bound the apostles to Jerusalem. Perhaps the persecu-

tion had become more fierce, and their enemies more daring; but it cannot be doubted, that the outpouring of the Spirit on the Samaritans would remind the apostles of their commission to begin at Jerusalem, to proceed to Samaria, and to carry the gospel to all the world. After leaving Samaria, Peter appears to have visited some cities in the plain of Sharon, where his miracles were the means of converting many Jews. He then fixed his residence at Joppa, conscious that Jerusalem should no longer be the principal scene of his labours, and yet uncertain what to do; but light ariseth to the upright in darkness. He was taught in vision that the Mosaic distinction between clean and unclean animals had no foundation in nature, but was an arrangement which God made for peculiar purposes, and could abrogate when he pleased. A reflecting mind would at once perceive that the distinction between unclean Gentiles, as the law regarded all idolaters, and holy Jews, might also be done away by Jehovah. Peter immediately drew this inference from the vision,[1] but a farther interposition of Divine grace was required to give it strength and clearness in his mind.—(Acts ix. 32-43.)

378. Scripture gives a particular account of the outpouring of the Spirit on believers at the feast of Pentecost, when the foundations of the Jewish Church were laid. It does the same in recording the admission of the Gentiles. The apostles were long of opinion that no Gentile could be admitted into the Church without first receiving circumcision, and conforming to all the requirements of the Mosaic law. Even after they had received from God many clear intimations to the contrary, this mistaken notion still kept hold of their minds, and caused serious dissensions in the Church. Doubts on the subject were first raised by the case of Cornelius, a centurion in an Italian cohort stationed at Cæsarea, the Roman capital of Palestine, and the usual residence of the governor. He appears to have been what was afterwards called a proselyte of the gate, and was well known for his almsdeeds, fasting, and observance of the usual hours of prayer; but, though he had evidently renounced heathenism, he

[1] Acts x. 28.

was still regarded by the Jews as a Gentile, with whom it was unlawful to eat. As his "kinsmen and near friends" resided in the city, it is thought that he had married and settled in Cæsarea. His knowledge was imperfect, for he wished to worship Peter, but his faith was sincere. A heavenly messenger appeared to him one day when engaged in secret devotion, and informed him that his prayers for direction would be answered by summoning Peter from Joppa. The apostle arrived four days after; the cause of the summons was explained, and Peter was asked to state what God required to be done. His address was very brief. He confessed (1.) that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile in the sight of God; and (2.) he referred in a few words to the person and work of Christ, of whom Cornelius and his friends had already heard: he is Lord of all, the deliverer of those under the power of the devil, judge of quick and dead, and the Messiah of the prophets, whom every one was bound to obey. The Holy Ghost immediately fell on them; they spoke with tongues, and magnified God as had been done by Jewish believers on the day of Pentecost. Peter's doubts were immediately dispelled, and he baptized them without requiring the initiatory rite of circumcision.—(Acts x.)

379. Information of these proceedings was soon conveyed to the Church at Jerusalem, where a large party expressed their disapproval, and called on Peter to give an account of his conduct. His reasoning was simple and unanswerable. First, the vision at Joppa proved, contrary to Jewish notions, that all men were alike in the eye of God (xi. 5-10); second, an angel commanded Cornelius to summon Peter, and the Spirit bade that apostle visit him (11-14); third, the Holy Ghost was given to these Gentiles. Christ's promise was, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost;" and the bestowal of this gift on Cornelius proved, that the "ye" did not mean *circumcised persons* only, but all men whatever. To confirm his statements, Peter produced the six brethren who accompanied him from Joppa to the house of Cornelius, and saw all that happened. His opponents "held their peace," but did not alter their opinions; others

thanked God that the Gentiles had received "repentance unto life" without being circumcised.—(Acts x. 15-18.)

380. The man who was instrumental in giving this development to the Church was not destined, however, to carry it much farther; he even faltered in the work so auspiciously begun. Another apostle was the builder, though not the founder of the Gentile Church; the strenuous upholder of its rights when Peter was intimidated by the opposition of the Jews; and the unwearied expounder of the gospel, freed from the restraints and one-sidedness of the Mosaic law. A brief sketch of his early life will show how God prepared him for this great work.

381. Paul or Saul, as he was also called, was born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia, famous in ancient times for its schools of philosophy and its learned men. Mention is made of his sister in the Acts, and he himself speaks of Andronicus and Junia as his relations.[1] He was brought up to the trade of tent-making, which was a lucrative business in Cilicia, where a peculiar kind of shaggy hair was obtained from native goats: it was the custom of Jewish parents to teach their children a trade, on the principle that every man should have some active employment for his leisure hours. Although Paul appears, when quite young, to have removed to Jerusalem for instruction under Gamaliel, and to have been even then a bigoted Jew, it is not improbable that his mind was turned to the study of Grecian learning during his residence in Tarsus. His writings betray considerable knowledge of the philosophy then current in the world; and in three instances he quotes from obscure authors,[2] whose very names would have been unknown to him, unless he had been acquainted with the literature of those days. He was thus prepared for the great work to which he was afterwards called, of preaching the gospel among the Gentiles, and defending it against the attacks or perversions of the learned.

382. Although the Jews had been often oppressed by other

[1] Rom. xvi. 7, 11.

[2] 1 Cor. xv. 33; Titus i. 12; but Acts xvii. 28 is from a Cilician poet. It is supposed that these three quotations are of a gnomic character, and might have come to the knowledge of Paul without his reading the works of the poets.

nations, and many of them forced to flee from Palestine, the distinctions of family and tribe were still carefully maintained: Paul informs us that he belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. But the low condition to which the nation was reduced in the time of Christ, did not prevent numbers, and among these the family of the apostle, from attaining to high distinction in the world. Josephus makes a remark on this subject worth quoting, "Florus, one of the successors of Festus as governor of Palestine, ventured then to do what no one had done before,—that is, to have men of the equestrian order whipped, and nailed to the cross before his tribunal; who, although they were by birth Jews, yet were they of Roman dignity notwithstanding."[1] By some means, of which we are ignorant, the ancestors of Paul had acquired for themselves and their posterity the rights of Roman citizenship. It was unlawful in inferior magistrates to scourge or crucify them, though these privileges were not always respected; and if they thought themselves unjustly treated, they might appeal from the governor of a province to the Emperor of Rome himself.

383. The conversion of Paul from a fierce persecutor to a devoted believer, forms an important era in the history of apostolic times. Luke has given an account of the miraculous events which led to this great change; Paul himself twice related them in speeches, recorded in the Acts and delivered towards the end of his life.[2] We gather from these three accounts, that, as Paul was approaching Damascus about noon, a bright cloud suddenly surrounded him, depriving him of speech and sight, and striking to the ground the company in which he travelled. An unseen speaker addressed him in the Hebrew tongue, and demanded the reason of the persecution in which he was engaged; his fellow-travellers heard the voice, but could not distinguish the words.[3] The speaker, after declaring himself to be Jesus, appointed Paul a witness of the truth among the Gentiles, and ordered him to repair to Damascus, where he

[1] *Wars*, ii. 14, 9.
[2] Acts ix. 3-9; xxii. 1-16; xxvi. 9-18.
[3] Compare John xii. 28.

would be told what to do. After three days' blindness and fasting, he was visited by a devout Jew named Ananias, by whom he was restored to sight, and probably baptized. He immediately withdrew to Arabia, where he continued about three years, experiencing the truth of what he afterwards taught, that the law was the schoolmaster to bring him to Christ, and perhaps receiving that gospel which he afterwards delivered to the churches. Returning to Damascus, he preached the gospel in the synagogues with such power that the Jews, unable to resist his arguments, incited the governor of the city to order his apprehension and death: but the brethren, in alarm for his safety, let him down from the walls by night in a basket.[1] He escaped to Jerusalem, and wished to connect himself with the Church; but believers, ignorant of the change that had taken place, and suspecting the purity of his motives, shunned his company, until Barnabas introduced him to Peter and James.[2] He was then recognised as a brother and an apostle. During this visit to Jerusalem he had a vision of Christ in the temple, who commanded him to leave that city immediately, and enter on the great work to which he had been called.[3] He was unwilling to give up the hope of converting his countrymen; but the command of Christ could not be disobeyed, and the foreign Jews in Jerusalem were already seeking his life. Accordingly, the brethren sent him to Tarsus by way of Cæsarea.[4]

384. The gospel was preached to the Gentiles in other places besides Cæsarea, before the apostles came to any formal decision regarding their admission into the Church. Paul and his fellow-persecutors, by threatening Damascus and the northern parts of Palestine with a visit, forced the believers who had taken refuge there, to flee to Phenicia, Antioch, and even Cyprus. At first, these disciples addressed themselves to the Jews only, but some men of Cyprus and Africa, who were less imbued with the exclusive spirit of Judaism than their brethren in Jerusalem, ventured to preach among the Gentiles of Antioch.

[1] 2 Cor. xi. 32; Acts ix. 22-25.
[2] Gal. i. 18, 19.
[3] Acts xxii. 17.
[4] Whether Stratonis or Philippi, is uncertain.

Probably their first hearers, like Cornelius, were proselytes, and prepared in some degree to receive the truth: but many were converted and admitted into the Church. Reports of these proceedings were soon sent to Jerusalem by the zealous Jews of Antioch; the case of Cornelius had been already discussed, and Barnabas was appointed by the apostles to visit Antioch, and instruct the Church how to proceed. He found the work of conversion progressing so favourably that he required additional assistance. Paul was then at Tarsus, and unwilling apparently to leave his native city; but at last Barnabas persuaded him to remove to Antioch, where they laboured in company for a whole year. The new doctrines caused so much talk among all ranks, that the wits of that luxurious and populous city applied the nickname of Christians to believers. Several distinguished members of the Church at Jerusalem visited Antioch at this time, and predicted a period of scarcity in Palestine. The persecution had driven wealthy believers away from Judea, and it was now necessary to appeal to the charity of brethren in other towns to support the poor. A sum of money was accordingly collected by the members of the Church at Antioch, who also appointed Barnabas and Paul to carry it to Jerusalem at the Passover.[1]—(Acts xi. 19-30.)

385. Antioch, the capital of Syria after the death of Alexander the Great, and long the residence of powerful sovereigns, was situated on the Orontes, about thirty miles from the sea. It was built, or at least first brought into notice by Seleucus Nicator,[2] who reigned from 312 to 280 B.C.; but great additions were made to it after his time. In its most prosperous days, the city is said to have formed a parallelogram, ten miles in circumference, and divided into four parts, separated from each other by a wall. About four miles further up the Orontes, was the suburb of Daphne, celebrated for the temple of Apollo and Diana, built there by Seleucus. The capital of an extensive monarchy, and well suited to be the emporium of commerce be-

[1] Acts xii 3.

[2] He gave the Jews the same rights of citizenship as the Greeks.

tween the east and west, Antioch rapidly increased in population and importance, until it became the "Queen of the East," and, next to Rome and Alexandria, the third city in the world. Though repeatedly captured by enemies, its citizens murdered, and their houses plundered or burnt; though subjected to frequent changes of masters, and several times levelled with the ground by earthquakes, it continued to be one of the most splendid cities in the East till the era of the Crusades. In ancient times it was celebrated for its trade and learning, but infamous for the luxury and depravity of its inhabitants. Cicero describes it as a very noble and wealthy city, abounding in learned men, and distinguished for schools of philosophy. Daphne, the favourite resort of its pleasure-loving citizens, was celebrated for groves of laurel and cypress, numerous fountains, and a salubrious climate; but the debauchery and luxury of those who frequented the place, made it a byword in ancient history. All the superstitions and heathen follies of Asia were met with at Antioch; and, after its conquest by the Romans, were imported into Rome, where poets satirized the Syrian abominations practised by the rich or weak-minded. It was in this learned and voluptuous capital that believers were first called Christians: what was intended for a reproach soon became an honour both to the Church and to the city. Believers adopted the name, and from this circumstance Antioch was afterwards called Theopolis, *the city of God.*

386. During the visit of Barnabas and Saul to Jerusalem, Herod Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great, put the apostle James to death. He is said to have been a prince of gentle manners, and very unlike his grandfather; but the Jews were displeased with his imitation of Roman customs, and he committed this cruel murder to gain their favour. Peter also was imprisoned, and would have shared the fate of James, unless he had been miraculously delivered from prison the night before his intended execution. He found the disciples, chiefly women, engaged in prayer, for meetings by day were not then safe. They screamed in terror when they saw the apostle, supposing, accord-

ing to an idea of the Jews, that "it was his angel." The other apostles were not present at this meeting: probably they were in hiding, and Peter was under the necessity of leaving Jerusalem without seeing them. In the persecution some years before, the most active agent of the high priest was suddenly arrested in his career of cruelty, and converted to the truth which he opposed; in this persecution, the king, with whom it began, was soon removed by a painful disease. He had been only three years on the throne of Palestine, when his death took place at Cæsarea. During the celebration of games in that city in honour of the Emperor Claudius, he entered the circus one morning clothed with a splendid silver robe, which reflected the rays of the morning sun so brightly that the spectators were all amazed, and several cried out, "A god! a god!" The people present echoed the sentiment, and applauded a speech that he made, with the cry, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man!" Herod did not decline this impious flattery, but both he and his courtiers were soon taught that he was a man. A fatal disease suddenly attacked him while sitting on his throne, and he was carried in great agony from the circus; he died five days after. Profane historians have not recorded the cause of the quarrel, mentioned in the Acts, between the Phenicians and Herod; but, according to the inspired writer, although friendly relations were interrupted, war had not broken out. The Tyrians had many reasons for securing the friendship of Herod. Not only did their trading towns draw supplies of corn and cattle from Palestine, but the king had treated them with great liberality. In Berytus, for example, he built a theatre, an amphitheatre, baths, and other public buildings at an immense expense; he also spent large sums on musical festivals, and shows of gladiators in that town.[1]—(Acts xii.)

387. The persecutor was dead, "but the word of God grew and multiplied." Barnabas and Paul returned to Antioch, where

[1] Josephus, *Ant.* xix. 7. 5. The events narrated in Acts xii. are probably introduced into the sacred narrative, because Paul and Barnabas were then in Jerusalem, and passed through Cæsarea on their way to Antioch, when Herod was struck with his fatal disease.

a number of distinguished prophets and teachers were assembled. They were instructed by the Spirit to set apart Barnabas and Paul for the special work of preaching the gospel in Asia Minor; while, to prepare Paul for the arduous labours on which he was about to enter, the vision of heaven and its blessedness, which he mentions in his second epistle to the Corinthians, was perhaps given. The two apostles,[1] that is, messengers, in a general sense, were accompanied by the evangelist Mark, whose duty, as their servant, was probably to baptize while they preached.[2] The conversion of Sergius Paulus, governor of Cyprus, was the first event of importance that occurred on the journey. He may have learned something of Judaism from Elymas, the Jewish sorcerer, and been in the habit of attending the synagogue, otherwise he would scarcely have asked an interview with Barnabas and Paul. Elymas withstood the missionaries, drawing his arguments from the Old Testament, for Paul charged him with perverting "the right ways of the Lord." For the same reason the apostle, in punishing him with blindness, said, "Thou! full of all subtilty and all mischief! child of the devil, and enemy of all righteousness!" It is supposed that Paul changed his name from Saul to Paul in commemoration of this conversion.

388. Barnabas and Paul next visited Perga, on the mainland, where Mark left them, and then Antioch in Pisidia, about 100 miles farther north. Entering the Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath-day, Paul, at the request of the president, addressed the assembly. Only the notes of his sermon, so to speak, have been preserved, and the apparent abruptness with which he passes from one subject to another, may thus be explained. (1.) In the introduction he gives a brief sketch of Jewish history from Moses to David, probably for the purpose of showing the faithfulness of God in keeping the promise made to Abraham (xiii. 17-22). The *seven* nations conquered in Canaan, to which reference is made, are mentioned by Moses.[3] Paul says that the judges ruled about 450 years, taking that number from the summation already performed in § 84, but without meaning to fix

[1] Acts xiv. 14. [2] 1 Cor. i. 13-17. [3] Deut. vii. 1.

the precise length of that period. (2.) Having shown God's faithfulness in keeping the promise made to Abraham, Paul next considered the one made to David, and asserted that it was fulfilled in Jesus. Here he appealed, like Peter, to *facts* and *prophecy*. All present knew John, and were aware that he was not the Messiah, for he expressly said so himself; Jesus claimed that dignity, and was put to death, but his resurrection showed that his claims were just (23-31). Prophecy was then appealed to in support of these facts. A promise was certainly made of a great deliverer, and Paul gave, in a quotation from the second Psalm, the substance of the prophecies relating to him,—"Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." But the resurrection was also laid down by the prophets as *the* proof of God's favour to Messiah, and approval of his work; and to establish that point other quotations were made from the Psalms. Putting fact and prophecy thus together, it was seen that they met in Jesus, and pointed him out as "the Son of God" (32-41). The proselytes were greatly affected by this sermon, and next day the whole city assembled to hear the gospel. Many in the town and neighbourhood were converted; but the Jews, opposing the preacher, and blaspheming the name of Jesus, had influence enough to raise a disturbance, which compelled Barnabas and Paul to leave the place.

389. Iconium was the next town in which the messengers of Christ preached the word. Notwithstanding the miracles which they wrought, the Jews succeeded, with the help of the Gentiles, in expelling them from the city. They next reached Lystra and the neighbourhood, where they were first mistaken for gods,[1] and in a few days stoned as impostors. A church was formed and elders ordained both there and in the neighbouring city of Derbe, in spite of the opposition of the Jews. After visiting several other places, Barnabas and Paul returned to Antioch in Syria, and filled the minds of believers with great

[1] Jupiter and Mercury, according to tradition, once visited Lycaonia. They were not well received by the inhabitants, who were afterwards destroyed by a flood for their impiety, except one couple, by whom the gods were kindly entertained.

joy, by the report of their success in the missionary field.—(Acts xiv.)

390. Some time after their arrival, a question distracted the Church, which was thought to have been conclusively settled several years before, *whether Gentile converts should be circumcised before being admitted into the Church by baptism?* As circumcision involved the keeping of the whole Mosaic law, the question was of the greatest importance. Some preachers from Jerusalem maintained that they ought to be circumcised: the liberal members of the Church at Antioch maintained that they ought not. The reason why this question was again raised must be sought for in the large number of Pharisees, all of whom were devoted to the law of Moses, who had joined the Church since the conversion of Cornelius. The opponents of Peter on that occasion did not unanimously acquiesce in the decision pronounced, and a strong party had now gathered round them, determined to enforce obedience to the law on the Gentiles. Disputes and divisions were prevented at Antioch by an agreement to refer the matter to "the apostles and elders," and a deputation, of which Barnabas, Paul, and Titus were members, proceeded to Jerusalem. In several private interviews with the apostles,[1] Paul explained his views on the subject, and his mode of dealing with the Gentiles. His arguments were so convincing that all acquiesced in his sentiments, perceiving that, while Peter was the apostle of the Jews, Paul was the apostle of the Gentiles.[2] The business of the public meeting was thus arranged in private. Accordingly, when the apostles and others met, and the more violent members of the Church had been allowed to speak, Peter briefly stated his sentiments. (1.) The Holy Ghost was bestowed on both Jew and Gentile by faith, not by circumcision; the law was therefore not incumbent upon the Gentiles. (2.) Experience had proved that the ceremonial law was a burden to the Jews; why then impose it upon others? (3.) Salvation comes through grace only, without respect to the rites of the law. Barnabas and Paul increased the effect of these

[1] Gal. ii. 2. [2] Gal. ii. 7, 8.

arguments by an account of their miracles and conversions among the heathen. James then addressed the meeting and showed that, though the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David by Christ was promised in Scripture, nothing whatever was said about the necessity of circumcision when the Gentiles should turn to Jehovah. All these arguments and speeches proved that circumcision, and with it the Mosaic law, ought not to be imposed on Gentile converts; but as the prejudices of Jews were everywhere very strong, the meeting adopted a conciliatory measure, which required the Gentiles to observe the precepts usually laid on proselytes of the gate. The Holy Ghost, agreeably to the promise, had led them to be of one mind, and directed them what steps to take. Barsabas and Silas, two of the principal elders, accompanied Barnabas and Paul to Antioch, and published the decree of the council in all the churches they visited.—(Acts xv. 1-35.)

391. A dissension between Paul and Barnabas, for they were but men, divided the stream of missionary effort into two channels. Barnabas wished to take Mark along with them on a second journey; but Paul, displeased with his weakness in turning back on their former tour, refused his concurrence. The former, in company with Mark, sailed to Cyprus, his native country; the latter, along with Silas, journeyed through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the disciples in the faith. Lystra, Derbe, and Iconium, the scenes of Paul's labours on his first journey, were next visited, and Timotheus, a young man well known among the Jews of those parts, was specially recommended by the brethren as a suitable assistant to the apostle in the missionary field. Although Timotheus was the son of a Jewess, he had not been circumcised. Probably the Jews did not consider him entitled to share in the blessings of the covenant, and the seal of circumcision had been unjustly withheld. By way of reproof to Jewish prejudice and pride, Paul, the ardent champion of truth, circumcised the youthful disciple. It is usually supposed that Paul judged it expedient to circumcise Timothy as a means of gaining the Jews; but this seems a mistaken idea,

especially when we consider the reason assigned for the proceeding, "on account of the Jews, for they all knew that his father was a Greek." Had Paul acted from expediency, becoming a Jew to gain the Jews, the sacred writer would have said, "for his mother was a Jewess." Every man of Jewish descent, and, indeed, every slave in a Hebrew family, was entitled to be circumcised; but the Jews of those parts seem to have withheld this seal of the covenant from Timothy, as if he had no right to receive it. Passing through Phrygia and Galatia, Paul, with Silas, Timotheus, and Luke, at length reached Troas. During their progress westward they had strengthened the churches already in existence, founded others, and enjoined on all the observance of the apostolic decree. A vision that Paul had one night guided their further movements: Europe was now destined to receive the truth at the hands of this apostle, and Macedonia to be the first scene of his labours.[1]—(Acts xv. 36–xvi. 10.)

392. Leaving Troas they sailed past Samothracia, and landed at Neapolis, the port of Philippi, to which they immediately proceeded. They spent some time preaching the word in that town, and founded one of the most flourishing churches of the apostolic age. But these triumphs only led to suffering. The Jews were not sufficiently numerous or wealthy to build a synagogue, but, according to the custom in such cases, they assembled in a convenient place at the river side, where water for purification could be easily procured. On Sabbath, Paul conversed with the women whom he found at this place, and Lydia was converted. She showed her faith by entertaining the missionaries in her own house during their stay at Philippi. Others also were gained over to the truth; for when the apostle left soon after, he had to comfort the brethren, who were lamenting that his residence among them had been so brief. A singular circumstance occasioned his departure. There was a young female slave in the town who was called a Pythoness, and had

[1] The vision appeared by night, but not necessarily in a dream. Paul and Silas prayed, and sang psalms in the jail of Philippi at midnight, and they may have been asking direction when the man of Macedonia appeared.

the reputation of being able to reveal the future.[1] She met the apostle and his friends several Sabbaths; and, though ignorant of their purpose in visiting Philippi, always cried out that they preached the way of salvation. Unclean spirits were made obedient to Christ's servants, as they had been to Christ himself; and the devil left the woman at the command of Paul. If we may judge from similar cures effected by our Lord, this wretched woman was healed both bodily and spiritually by the apostle. Her masters, on finding that their gains from her fortune-telling were at an end, gathered an idle crowd around them, seized the missionaries, and dragged them before the magistrates. For the first time in history the messengers of Christ appeared as criminals before a Roman judgment-seat. Hitherto Jews had been their persecutors and judges, but the spread of the truth roused the hatred of other worldly powers. They were charged with teaching customs which Romans could not lawfully receive or do. Their enemies probably preferred this charge, because the slave would tell them that Apollo, by whose aid she pretended to reveal the future, was no god; that soothsaying by him was a delusion and a snare; and that their devotion to his service would only insure their final ruin. The accusation was made by Romans, not by Jews; and this speaking against the gods would enable Paul's enemies to stir up the bigoted multitude against him.[2] He and Silas were scourged without a trial, and then cast into prison, where their feet were put in the stocks. The conversion of the jailer took place that night. He had perhaps heard the Pythoness crying after the two prisoners about the way of salvation; and hence the first words he uttered, when the earthquake shook the city, and the prison doors flew open, were, "What must I do to be saved?" He believed they could save him, but at that time he could scarcely have told *from what;* to be saved was a privilege which he wished to earn by working, and hence he cried, *What must I do?* So rapid was

[1] Acts xvi. 16, "spirit of divination," or, margin, "of Python."

[2] The heinous character of the offence is indicated by the magistrates rending their clothes.

his growth in grace and faith, that he and all his house were baptized before morning. Next day Paul and Silas, after administering a sharp rebuke to the magistrates, left the city for Amphipolis.—(Acts xvi. 11-40.)

393. There is a difficulty connected with this visit of Paul to Philippi, which requires to be explained. Philippi in our version is called "the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony;" but though profane authors relate that a Roman colony was settled in Philippi by the Emperor Augustus before the time of Paul, they also agree in calling Amphipolis the capital city of the district, and in assigning a secondary place to Philippi. Æmilius Paulus, the Roman conqueror of Macedonia, divided the country into four provinces, and assigned a chief city to each: Amphipolis was the capital of the division in which Philippi was situated. The best way of removing this apparent difference between sacred and profane history, is to fall back on the literal rendering of the passage: it runs thus—"Philippi the first city of that part of Macedonia." A place may be first in rank or in situation. Here the meaning cannot be first in rank or *chief*, as we have seen; but it may most appropriately be first in situation or *nearest*. To voyagers following the route Paul pursued on this journey, Philippi, with its port Neapolis, was the first or nearest city of that division of Macedonia. In accordance with this view, the port of Neapolis was not considered to be distinct from Philippi.[1]

394. Passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, Paul and his companions arrived at Thessalonica, and were again exposed to the malice and hatred of unbelieving Jews. He showed that Christ required to suffer and rise from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that Jesus was the promised Messiah. During the two or three weeks of their residence in this town, some of the Jews, a great number of the Greeks, and not a few of the chief women, believed, and formed the nucleus of the Church at Thessalonica. A tumult was soon raised by Paul's unbelieving

[1] "We sailed away *from Philippi*" (xx. 6), where Philippi and Neapolis are looked on as one.

countrymen; the apostle was forced to hide himself from their fury; but his host Jason and some others were dragged before the rulers, on a charge of setting up another king than Cæsar—one Jesus. These seditious Jews contrived to throw the city into such consternation by this charge, that Paul, along with Silas and Timothy, was compelled to withdraw by night to Berea. A better reception awaited them there; many Jews examined the Scriptures to see whether Paul's statements at Thessalonica were true, and numerous conversions took place. But malicious Jews followed the apostle from Thessalonica to Berea, and he had to leave the town in haste by the road leading to the sea-coast. His guides hoped by this means to baffle their pursuers; for, instead of taking ship, they appear to have journeyed by land to Athens. They left Paul in that city, and returned to Berea, where Silas and Timothy were still residing. —(Acts xvii. 1-15.)

395. Paul was not idle during his stay in Athens. In other towns he reasoned in the synagogues on the Sabbath; there he did the same, but spoke also of Christ daily in the market, or place of public resort, to every one who would listen. He knew his opportunity, and was deeply grieved at the shameful idolatry that prevailed. The news of his strange teaching spread among the people, and especially the philosophers, who politely requested him to explain his sentiments on Mars-hill, where the famous court of Areopagus, which tried cases of murder, impiety, and immorality, met towards the end of each month. Strangers from all parts of the civilized world then frequented the schools of philosophy in Athens, and many of them were among the apostle's hearers. Wherever he turned his eye, as he stood before the assembly that met on the occasion, it encountered the splendid monuments of Athenian art and magnificence—altars, temples, statues dedicated to the numerous gods, goddesses, and heroes of ancient Greece. The history of civilisation and art in Europe was connected with every spot on land and sea, which could be seen from the hill; nowhere had the unaided human intellect made greater progress, and here the greatness of the natural man

was brought face to face with the might of the Spirit. How admirably was the inspired apostle enabled to adapt his address to the circumstances of his audience! He was in contact with Athenian philosophy and politeness, not with Jewish malice or Roman rudeness; and his speech is wholly different from any that he had previously delivered in the service of Jesus. His brief address at Lystra resembles it, though very slightly. He commenced with what might be taken for a compliment or a censure, perhaps both, by calling the Athenians "too superstitious," or, as the word may be rendered, "more God-fearing in all respects" than others. An altar which he had seen in the city, dedicated "to the Unknown God," gave rise to this remark. Taking the "Unknown God" as his text, the apostle set the truth before his hearers under the following heads: (1.) External worship only by temples and statues, such as those before their eyes, is not acceptable to God (24, 25). (2.) The human race is of one blood, and was created to serve God. As men are descended from a single pair, so they should all have the same God, and the same mode of worship: they should also regard themselves as members of the same family, contrary to the proud exclusiveness of the Greeks, who imagined themselves better than other nations (26-28). (3.) This truth was lost for many ages by the nations, but God was then inviting all to repent of their sin in forsaking him (29, 30). (4.) Christ is the bestower of repentance with its related blessings, and in proof of his appointment to this office, God raised him from the dead. Such were the heads of Paul's discourse before his learned audience. It would be a mistake to suppose that the whole discourse has been given by the sacred writer: the condensation of thought, the rapid transitions, and the brevity of statement, give it more the appearance of notes than of a finished address. Paul was not allowed to proceed after mentioning the resurrection; the wise laughed, and the ignorant were confounded. Some, however, believed, and others intended to hear him again concerning *this person*,[1] Christ. During Paul's residence in Athens he was

[1] "This matter," by mistake apparently in our version

joined by Silas and Timothy from Macedonia; but he appears to have sent them back again shortly after.—(Acts xvii. 16-34.)

396. The philosophers of Athens were too proud to submit with humility to the teaching of Paul; he was more successful in the corrupt city of Corinth. He there met with two believing Jews, Aquila and his wife Priscilla, who afterwards greatly assisted the apostle in his labours: they were recently arrived from Rome in consequence of an edict of Claudius forbidding Jews to live in that city. As they were probably believers, it is thought that a Christian church already existed in Rome. Paul preached at first in the synagogue, but the opposition of the Jews became at last so violent, that he was forced to meet for worship with the disciples in the house of Justus near the synagogue. He warned his countrymen of their danger in rejecting Christ, and indignantly left them to reap the consequences of their hardened conduct. Experience taught him that they would endeavour to drive him from the city, or take his life, and the inveterate malice of his countrymen filled him with alarm. Silas and Timotheus arrived at this critical time from Macedonia to encourage as well as assist the apostle by their presence; but his greatest source of comfort was the assurance which he received in vision, "Be not afraid, for I have much people in this city." Stephanas "the first-fruits of Achaia," Crispus the chief ruler of the synagogue, and Gaius the host of Paul, with members of their households, were baptized by Paul; and other converts were added to the Church. Jewish malice, however, was soon excited against the apostle. Sosthenes, the new ruler of the synagogue, with many of the Jews, assaulted Paul, and charged him before Gallio, the governor of Greece, with persuading men "to worship God contrary to the law." Gallio was the brother of Seneca the philosopher, and knew his duty too well to be bribed or imposed on by those turbulent men. Perhaps Erastus, the chamberlain of the city, had already joined the Church, and now exerted his influence on behalf of his friend; for without waiting to hear Paul's defence, Gallio at once dismissed the case as a frivolous quarrel between two

parties of Jews. The rabble round the judgment-seat, seeing the repulse which Sosthenes had sustained, gratified their ill-will towards the Jews by inflicting on him a severe beating. Gallio did not think it necessary to punish those who took part in this assault.[1] Sosthenes was afterwards brought to a better frame of mind; why should we doubt that he was the same man whom Paul afterwards called *Sosthenes our brother?*[2] For eighteen months the apostle continued to preach in Corinth and the neighbourhood, supporting himself by making tents; and then embarked for Syria with Aquila and Priscilla, intending to be in Jerusalem during the approaching Passover.—(Acts xviii. 1-18.)

397. The apostle left his two companions at Ephesus, where the field seemed so inviting that they urged him also to remain. He could not consent, however, but promised to return.[3] Landing at Cæsarea, he pursued his way to Jerusalem, and went down to Antioch after the Passover. Peter and he met in that city; Barnabas also was then in Antioch, and a deputation had come from Jerusalem.[4] Was this another council, or a missionary meeting of apostles and evangelists for friendly intercourse and mutual encouragement? Many members of the Jewish party in the Church were still so zealously attached to the law, that they considered the Gentiles unclean, and would not eat with them unless circumcised. The deputation from Jerusalem entertained this opinion; and, on their arrival at Antioch, they declined all intercourse with the Gentile believers. Peter, Barnabas, and others, who had not manifested any disposition to despise the Gentiles previously, immediately avoided the uncircumcised brethren to the surprise and sorrow of Paul. He reproved Peter before them all for double-dealing; and harmony appears

[1] He may, however, have rescued Sosthenes from the violence of the mob. It is astonishing that Gallio should have met with such little sympathy from divines. His name has become a synonyme for *indifferent* and *ungodly*, but if all magistrates had acted as he did, the Church would never have lamented or boasted a single martyr.

[2] 1 Cor. i. 1.

[3] In consequence of a vow, he had shorn his head before leaving Europe, and required to offer the prescribed sacrifices within thirty days after.

[4] Gal. ii. 11.

to have been again restored in the Church at Antioch.—(Acts xviii. 19-22.)

398. After this dispute, the apostle, setting out on a third missionary journey, visited the churches of Galatia and Phrygia in order, and at length reached Ephesus, according to his promise. A great work had begun there during his absence, and a new labourer in the Lord's vineyard had been gained through the instrumentality of Aquila and Priscilla. An Alexandrian Jew, named Apollos,[1] a disciple of John the Baptist, had come to Ephesus, and reasoned in the synagogue on repentance and remission of sin, the leading doctrines of John's preaching. From the language in which Paul addressed the synagogue of Lystra, and the present case, it is evident that the teaching of John was well known among the foreign Jews. Aquila and Priscilla communicated to him "the way of God more perfectly" in the gospel. Several converts were made, and a Church formed, though believers still met in the synagogue; but the opposition of the Jews became so great, that Apollos was compelled to leave the city. He withdrew to Corinth, where he proved most useful in confuting the Jews, and strengthening the Church. Paul arrived in Ephesus after his departure, and continued to labour there for above two years; his first converts were twelve disciples of John, who had probably received baptism from Apollos. Hearing that they were baptized, and thinking only of the baptism of Christ, Paul inquired if they had also received the Holy Ghost? This showed him his mistake, and led to their reception of Jesus as the Messiah. He then preached Christ in the synagogue for about three months, and made a number of converts; but opposition arose, and several spoke so violently against his teaching before the congregation, that Paul followed the same course at Ephesus as at Corinth,—he separated from the synagogue, and met with the disciples in the school of Tyrannus. Notwithstanding the malice and violence of his countrymen, he continued to teach in Ephesus with the

1 Contracted from Apollonius, so Lucanus, Lucas; Silvanus, Silas; Cleopatros, Cleopas; Alexander, Alexas.

greatest success. But they never ceased to annoy him, and his life during that time was a painful "fighting with wild beasts."[1] —(Acts xviii. 23–xix. 12.)

399. The teaching and miracles of Paul soon attracted the attention of all ranks in proconsular Asia; sick persons were healed, unclean spirits cast out, and other miracles wrought by the apostle. Seven Jews, who tried to imitate him in expelling evil spirits, nearly paid for their rashness with their lives; others, who had been admitted into the Church, but still retained in their possession, if they did not use, magical books, threw them into a heap, and set it on fire. Ephesian charms and amulets were highly prized in those times, and the great value of the books thus destroyed shows the success of Paul's labours. Even the famous temple of Diana was deserted by so many worshippers, that the silversmiths who sold little images of it to strangers and others, began to apprehend the entire destruction of their trade. Some of the Asiarchs also, or those who managed the religious affairs of the province, were very friendly to the apostle, if not believers themselves. Notwithstanding the promising state of the Church and the respectability of many of those who believed, Paul supported himself and his friends by labouring at the trade which he learned in youth. A sedition caused by the silversmiths, and encouraged by the Jews, hastened Paul's departure from Ephesus. He had already made preparations for leaving: Timotheus and Erastus had sailed for Macedonia, and Paul would soon have followed with Gaius and Aristarchus, but the sedition drove him out of the town earlier than he intended.—(Acts xix. 13-41.)

400. The image of Diana, which the Ephesians supposed fell from heaven, was perhaps a meteoric stone. Alexander, whom the Jews put forward in the theatre to address the mob, appears to have been the same person called the coppersmith, in Paul's epistle to Timothy: he was an active and unscrupulous opponent of the truth, and his malicious meddling drew down upon him the prayer, "The Lord reward him according to his deeds."

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 32; Acts xx. 19.

During the two years Paul resided at Ephesus, he composed several of his epistles to the churches of Christ. He was informed of the troubles that had broken out in the Galatian churches, and several brethren[1] had recently arrived from Corinth, who reported the divisions and immoral or unhallowed practices prevalent among the believers of that city, but he did not feel at liberty to leave his post at Ephesus—for "there was a great door and effectual opened unto him, and there were many adversaries."[2] The apostle sent a sharp letter to the "foolish Galatians," who had allowed false teachers to seduce them from the truth. Another letter, in which instruction, reproof and satire, were most admirably blended, was carried by Titus to the Corinthians, whom Paul promised to visit shortly.

401. It was the intention of the apostle to leave Ephesus at Pentecost, spend the summer in Macedonia, and pass the winter in Corinth;[3] but these arrangements were somewhat altered by the enlarged sphere of usefulness which he found in Ephesus. The second epistle to the Corinthians was probably written from Macedonia after the riot caused by Demetrius, but the place of its composition cannot be precisely fixed.

402. On leaving Ephesus, Paul visited the churches of Macedonia, and spent three months in Corinth; but no account is given of what took place during his stay in these parts. Probably the first epistle to Timothy, who had returned to Ephesus, was written at this time. That evangelist required encouragement and direction in the circumstances in which he was placed; enemies without, and false or mistaken friends within, sought to ruin the infant church of Ephesus; Jewish prejudices made men trust to descent from Abraham and to the ceremonial law; and the Church was thus plagued with "endless genealogies" to prove purity of blood, and with "another doctrine" than the gospel. The fables of heathen philosophy also threatened to leaven the faith of the Ephesian Church. Paul's object in writing, therefore, was both to caution and direct his youthful assistant. While at Corinth he wrote the epistle to the Romans, certainly

[1] 1 Cor. xvi. 17. [2] 1 Cor. xvi. 9. [3] 1 Cor. xvi. 5, 6.

the most profound and instructive of all his letters. When about to sail from Cenchrea for Syria, Paul received information of a plot by the Jews to murder him, and was compelled to return through Macedonia. A number of friends preceded him to Troas; he and Luke sailed, five days after, from Neapolis for the same place. They continued a week at Troas; and the last day of their residence there furnishes us with a warrant for long sermons on solemn occasions, and a caution against their too frequent occurrence, in the accident that happened to Eutychus.[1] Miletus was the next port at which Paul spent some days. He was anxious to reach Jerusalem before Pentecost, and instead of visiting the church at Ephesus, he summoned the elders to Miletus. His address to these beloved friends was very affecting. Believers in every city foretold the sufferings that awaited him at Jerusalem, and entreated him not to enter that city; but, if the Spirit enabled them to prophesy, it was also constraining him to act, and he could not forego his journey to Jerusalem. Paul's faith was tried and purified by this conflict between affection for his weeping friends and duty to his Master. Addressing the elders of Ephesus as those whom he expected never to see again in the flesh,—(1.) He reminded them of his *faithfulness* in preaching Christ to their church; and, (2.) He declared his *readiness* to suffer bonds and death for the gospel. But, (3.) He gave them warning of wolves from without, and perverse men from within, who should seduce believers from the faith; and then, (4.) Tenderly committed these sorrowing elders to the care of a faithful Saviour. Continuing his voyage, Paul at length reached Tyre, where he and his companions, waiting till the ship should resume her voyage, resided seven days with the brethren whom they expected to find. At Cæsarea, they lived for some time with Philip the evangelist, one of the seven who were ordained to the deaconship about twenty years before; and during their stay in that town, a prophet, named Agabus, predicted imprisonment and suffering to Paul, if he should persist in proceeding to Jerusalem. All present earnestly besought him not to go; but,

[1] Paul did not utter a word of blame against the young man.

though their entreaties and grief were heart-rending, Paul felt that it was his duty, and would not yield.—(Acts xx. 1.–xxi. 14.)

403. The day after Paul's arrival in Jerusalem, he had an interview with James, the brother of our Lord, who had summoned all the elders to meet the apostle. As the Jews, whether believers or not, supposed that Paul taught their countrymen in foreign lands not to observe the law of Moses, it was thought advisable by the meeting to give a public proof of the falsehood of this idea. For that purpose Paul purified himself with four of their number who had made a vow, and entered the temple to intimate the fulfilment of the days of purification before offering the prescribed sacrifices. This had almost succeeded in convincing the Jews, when some of the apostle's enemies from Ephesus seized him in the temple, and loudly charged him with violating the law and polluting the temple. A seditious mob immediately assaulted Paul, who would have been killed on the spot, if the commander of the Roman soldiers in the castle of Antonia had not rescued him out of their hands. Even then the mob was so violent that they pressed upon the soldiers, and with loud cries demanded his death. A mistake which the captain committed was probably the means of saving Paul's life. He supposed him an illiterate Egyptian rebel, who had created an uproar in Jerusalem some time previously, and escaped into the wilderness with 400 assassins. Anxious to secure his person and punish him in the usual way, he made more haste to save the man than he would have done if he had known the real circumstances of the case. While on the stairs leading to the castle, Paul obtained permission to address the people. He referred to the character for zeal in upholding the law of Moses which the chief priests and elders knew he had once borne; and then proceeded to explain the change in his conduct. Jesus himself had appeared to him when engaged in persecuting the Christians; his first instructor in the new faith was a "devout man according to the law;" and how could any one complain of him if, in these circumstances, he became a believer in the Messiahship of Jesus? But he had equally strong reasons for preaching to the

Gentiles and not to the Jews only. The same Jesus again appeared unto him as he prayed in the temple, ordered him to leave Jerusalem without delay, and commissioned him to go to the Gentiles. Paul was not allowed to proceed farther; the crowd threw dust into the air, cast off their clothes in testimony against him, and with louder cries than before demanded his death. Lysias, the commander of the troops, did not understand what passed, through ignorance of the Hebrew language; but on seeing this renewal of the tumult, he proposed to examine Paul by scourging. The right of Roman citizenship, possessed by the apostle, saved him, however, from this indignity; but he lay in fetters all night.—(Acts xxi. 15–xxii. 30.)

404. On the following morning the Sanhedrim was convened, and Paul brought before them. He was allowed to speak for himself, probably after his accusers had stated the crimes laid to his charge.[1] Casting an earnest look round upon the semicircle of elders, many of whom were the friends or acquaintances of his younger years, he boldly declared, "I have lived in all good conscience before God unto this day." The words had scarcely left his lips, and his eyes were still wandering among his judges, when he heard some one say, "Smite him on the mouth." Irritated by the indignity, the injustice, and the pain, Paul exclaimed, "Thou hypocrite, God shall smite thee!" The bystanders, feeling that the accused had been wronged, said, "Revilest thou God's high priest?" and were answered with truth, "I knew not that it was the high priest" who spoke.[2] The apostle saw the absurdity of proceeding with his defence before such judges; he knew the opinions of almost every one of them, and that the parties into which they were divided agreed on nothing except in hating Jesus. Making short work with the charges brought against him, he proclaimed himself a Pharisee, and declared

[1] These appear to have been the violation of the law, the polluting of the temple, and belief in the resurrection of Jesus.

[2] This has always been regarded as a difficult passage, and for that reason has been given at greater length in the text. Paul knew the high priest, and perhaps every member of the council quite well; but for the reason given above, he did not know that it was Ananias who spoke.

most truly that "the hope and resurrection of the dead" was the real accusation to which he had to plead. The Sanhedrim was immediately divided. The Pharisees maintained that an angel or a spirit had appeared to him on the road to Damascus, and in the temple : the Sadducees pronounced him an impostor. A stormy discussion arose, the one party proposing to set him free as an honoured servant of God ; the other wishing to see him put to death, and Lysias had again to rescue the apostle from violence. Ananias and the Sadduceean party had then most influence with the Romans, and Paul was still kept in prison. His life was certainly in great danger ; and his fondly cherished hopes of preaching the truth in Rome seemed dashed to the ground ; but that night Christ encouraged him in a vision, and assured him that these hopes would yet be realized. A plot was formed next morning by about forty Jews, with the assistance of the priests, to assassinate the apostle ; but Lysias was apprised of their intention, and sent him under a strong guard of soldiers to Felix, the Roman governor of Palestine, who was residing in Cæsarea, the capital of the province.—(Acts xxiii.)

405. Felix was a man of vicious habits, and no education. He had been a slave in the family of the Emperor Claudius, and, on receiving his freedom, took the name of Claudius Felix, though he is also sometimes called Antonius Felix from Antonia, the mother of the emperor. Pallas, his brother, the favourite of Claudius, obtained for him honourable offices in the state. After spending several years in an inferior position in Galilee, he was made procurator of Palestine, where he discharged the almost regal functions of the office with a cruelty and wickedness, that could only have been expected from one who had been formerly a slave. Tertullus, the orator employed by the Jewish rulers to plead against Paul before Felix, affirmed that great quietness was enjoyed, and many worthy deeds done under his government, but history has not approved these statements. On the contrary, robberies, murders, and pretenders to Messiahship prevailed in an uncommon degree ; crimes of every sort were committed by the governor himself, or by his authority , and when he

was recalled after an administration of seven years, the oppressed Jews accused him of tyranny and bribery before Nero. He was twice married; first to Drusilla, the niece of Cleopatra and Antony; and then to another Drusilla, the beautiful daughter of Herod Agrippa,[1] whom he persuaded to leave her husband Azizus, king of Emesa. His son Agrippa, by the second marriage, was killed in the famous eruption of Mount Vesuvius (A.D. 79).

406. A few days after the arrival of Paul at Cæsarea, Ananias and some of the elders appeared to accuse him before the governor. They had engaged the services of an orator, named Tertullus, who charged the apostle with exciting sedition among the Jews in all parts of the world, with acting as ringleader of the Nazarenes, and with profaning the temple. Paul denied the truth of these charges, and insisted on his accusers making their appearance; crimes were laid to his charge, in support of which neither proof nor witness was brought forward. Felix deferred pronouncing sentence until Lysias should come down, for he was too well acquainted with the animosity of the Jews against believers not to know that Paul was innocent; meanwhile he detained him in prison, under the idea that he would be bribed to decide in his favour. Frequent conferences took place between them, and sometimes the wicked governor trembled at the exhortations and warnings of his noble prisoner. On one of these occasions he was accompanied by his paramour Drusilla. Two years passed away: Felix was recalled, and when Festus, his successor, arrived in Cæsarea, he found Paul bound with fetters to please the Jews.—(Acts xxiv.)

407. Soon after the entrance of the new governor on office, another plot was formed to assassinate Paul, probably by some of the forty men who had bound themselves by a great oath two years before. The chief priests and elders requested Festus on his arrival in Jerusalem to put the apostle to death. Failing in this, they urged him to bring Paul up from Cæsarea for trial; and they engaged a party of the fanatical Jews, with

[1] Acts xii.

whom the country was then infested, to overpower the guard and murder the prisoner on the road. Festus refused their request, but invited the leading men to bring their accusations against the apostle before himself at Cæsarea. The old charges of violating the law, profaning the temple, and being a ringleader of the Nazarenes, were revived, with the addition of speaking against Cæsar. Festus was at a loss how to proceed—the questions he was called on to investigate were new and strange; but at last he proposed to Paul another examination of his case before the Sanhedrim of Jerusalem. The prisoner, with just indignation, refused to appear again before that unrighteous tribunal. Exercising his rights of Roman citizenship, he appealed to the Emperor Nero, although no sentence had been pronounced against him.[1] Festus, however, did not know in what terms he should write to the Emperor regarding Paul, for the accusations of the Jews would have puzzled the lawyers at Rome, as much as they did himself.—(Acts xxv.)

408. Agrippa, king of Chalcis, who paid Festus a visit of congratulation on his accession to office, appears to have relieved him from this difficulty. That prince and his suite, with the highest military officers in attendance on the governor, and with the chief citizens of the capital, assembled to hear a discourse from Paul, and assist Festus in drawing up the letter to Nero regarding him. The apostle assumed that Agrippa was familiar with the prophecies relating to Messiah, and with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. He did not proceed to prove anything, therefore, as was usual in his controversial addresses, but merely explained to Agrippa why he became a believer in Jesus as Messiah, and what he taught the people. Imprisonment and injustice had not broken the spirit or weakened the faith of the apostle. Retirement for a season from the incessant wanderings and labours, in which he had been engaged for upwards of twenty years, seems to have been necessary for the welfare of his own

[1] There is a remarkable difference here between the Roman procedure and our own. With us an appeal is made against the sentence of a court; but no sentence was passed in this case.

soul. Though he had preached to others, and undergone hardships without number in the cause of Christ, even Paul could say shortly before his apprehension, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly, so fight I not as one that beateth the air, but I keep under my body, lest . . . I should be a castaway." A temporary withdrawal from the cares and business of the Church, though a loss to it at the time, was useful to the apostle himself, and most advantageous to the Church in future ages. His enthusiastic and convincing earnestness before this brilliant audience at Cæsarea, proves the increased strength of his faith; and the numerous epistles to various churches, which soon came from his pen, formed an invaluable legacy to succeeding generations. Festus, accustomed to the cold indifference of philosophers without faith, was so surprised at Paul's earnest manner, that he thought him mad. Agrippa was carried away with its manifest sincerity, and wished but had not courage to become a Christian; but the impression left on the minds of both was so favourable, that Paul might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Nero.

409. There are two points about the speech of Paul which require special notice. First, "The prophets did say . . . that Christ should be the first that should rise from the dead." The same doctrine is laid down elsewhere: Christ, "the first-fruits of them that slept;"[1] "the first-born of the dead;"[2] and "the first-begotten of the dead."[3] It is not meant absolutely that Jesus was the first who rose from the grave. Many men had been restored to life after death, even after having been laid in the grave. But there was a wide difference between their resurrection and Christ's. He was laid in the grave; but once raised from it, he never returned thither again. They were restored to life for a season, the sleep of death was broken for a few years, and corruption again seized them for its prey. So far as a triumph over death was concerned, Christ was the first-begotten of the dead. It sustained a temporary check in the persons of others, but not a complete overthrow. Our version of the Scriptures

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 20. [2] Col. i. 18. [3] Rev. i. 5.

makes it appear that several saints rose from the grave on our Lord's death; in reality, however, they rose after his resurrection. Supposing, therefore, that they were possessed of glorified bodies, and returned no more to the grave, it still holds true that Christ was the first-fruits of the dead. Second, Agrippa said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."[1] Some suppose that the words are satirical, and should run, "with a little thou persuadest me," that is, with very few arguments you wish me to join the despised sect of Christians. This translation is altogether inadmissible; first, because Paul used no arguments, but was simply stating his case, and what he taught; and, second, because Paul's reply shows, that he at least understood the king to mean "almost," not "with a little," "slightly," or "easily."—(Acts xxvi.)

410. After some time Paul, with a number of other prisoners, was put on board a ship bound from Cæsarea to Myra in Lycia; a guard of Roman soldiers, under the command of a centurion named Julius, accompanied them. They left Palestine about July, for the north wind, which blows towards Egypt during that and the following month, compelled them to *sail under*,—that is, to the south of Cyprus.[2] On reaching Myra, some time was lost in finding a vessel bound for Italy, and when at last Julius was successful, the ship in which they embarked proved such a bad sailer that they had only reached Crete at the end of September. An autumnal storm, of which ancient navigators stood in the greatest dread, arose when they left the island. The ship soon became unmanageable; the crew expected every moment that she would founder or strike on the coast of Africa; they had no idea of their position, except that they were driving up and down the Adriatic sea; and so imminent was their danger, that for fourteen days they scarcely tasted food. At last the

[1] The use of this word proves Agrippa's intimate knowledge of the facts of the gospel. Paul did not and could not use it, for it was a term of reproach in his days. Had the assembly been composed of Jews, Agrippa would have said a *Nazarene*. The word *Christian* is a proof of the truth of the narrative. Comp. 1 Peter iv. 16.

[2] Very few maps trace Paul's voyage off this island correctly; they make him sail on the north of the island. See verse 7.

ship struck on a headland of the island of Malta, but every man on board escaped with his life. The crew and passengers experienced great kindness from the barbarous, that is, foreign inhabitants of the place.[1] After three months they again embarked, and safely reached Puteoli, the port of Rome for large ships. They then journeyed to the metropolis by land, and Paul was delivered to the custody of the captain of the Pretorian guard, who allowed him to dwell in private lodgings, attended by a soldier.—(Acts xxvii. 1–xxviii. 16.)

411. The minuteness with which the shipwreck and other incidents on this voyage are narrated is certainly peculiar. Paul had already been three times shipwrecked, and had spent a night and a day on the deep; but the sacred writer has not related these adventures in the Acts. Luke accompanied the apostle on this voyage; he shared the danger, and saw all the means used to escape from it. Some suppose that he must have kept a diary of what took place,—a thing by no means unlikely, but that cannot account for the minuteness with which the striking of the ship, the advice of Paul, and the escape of all on board are narrated. The evangelist is not more minute on the first part of the voyage (xxvii. 1-16), than in his account of other journeys on which he accompanied the apostle: and the keeping of a diary, supposing that it was carried off in safety from the wreck, cannot account for the minuteness of detail in the second part. The true reason lies on the surface. Paul not only cherished the hope of seeing Rome, but had been assured by God that he should preach there On this voyage his prospects of seeing that city grew so faint, that "all hope of being saved was taken away" during the fortnight of the storm. There was, therefore, a trial of Paul's faith; the vision, the safety of the crew, and the narrow escape of the prisoners, were its triumph. Hence the minuteness with which the events of the shipwreck are narrated: "Thou must be brought before Cæsar," that is, thou must see Rome, is the point on which the whole narrative turns.

412. About nine years before the arrival of Paul in Rome, all

[1] They were most likely a mixed race of Carthaginians, Greeks, and Romans.

the Jews had been ordered to leave the city; but that edict had either been withdrawn or was forgotten, for a considerable number had now returned. Even a Christian church had been founded, and was flourishing in the metropolis of the world. No fewer than twenty-six persons are mentioned by name among its members, in the epistle which they received from Paul about 58 A.D., and the terms in which he speaks of them show that they had then recently settled in Rome. Priscilla and Aquila, from whom he parted at Ephesus, were there; Epenetus was converted in Asia, though then resident in Rome; Mary, another member, bestowed much labour on the apostle, and therefore she must have recently returned to Rome; Andronicus and Junia were his fellow-prisoners in some place unknown; and others are mentioned from whom he received much kindness on his travels. Evidently, therefore, the believers of Rome had been scattered over the whole civilized world, and were then only returning from exile to their former occupations. Three days after his arrival, the apostle, through his friends, requested the chief men among the Jews to pay him a visit. When they were assembled, he assured them that he had no intention of accusing his countrymen before Cæsar, but was forced to appeal to his tribunal for his own freedom. He was informed that they had received no letters regarding him, and that their friends, who had recently arrived from Judea, never even mentioned his name. It follows from this statement, that the apprehension of Paul was only one of those momentary bursts of fury to which the Jews sometimes gave way; the common people, though not the rulers, soon forgot the disturbance, and the circumstances which led to it. Jews, therefore, who may have been in Jerusalem when Paul was seized, and left shortly after for Rome, would probably not think the riot worth mentioning, even if they had been present. Neither is it surprising that no letters were written by the Sanhedrim to the principal Jews of Rome. It is sometimes said, that the chief priests and elders may not have known whether any of their countrymen had returned to that city after their expulsion in A.D. 52; but, as travellers appear to have

arrived in Rome from Jerusalem, this supposition must be given up. In reality, no opportunity had occurred to the rulers of sending messengers with their charges against Paul to their countrymen in Rome, earlier than the vessel in which the apostle himself sailed. But, though there had, it is most unlikely that they would have committed this indiscretion; letters from the Sanhedrim might have caused some display of angry feeling against the apostle; and what would have been the result? Only a few years before, the Jews had been expelled from Rome for turbulence and misconduct; and if they had excited a riot against Paul, a Roman citizen whom Festus and Agrippa agreed in pronouncing innocent, the imperial government might have adopted severer measures. It was manifestly prudent, therefore, on the part of the rulers in Jerusalem, to keep their countrymen ignorant of the appeal made by Paul, and of the charges which they had preferred against him. At a second meeting which Paul had with these Jews, he proved from prophecy and facts, that Jesus was the Messiah promised to the fathers. Some received the gospel, but others rejected it, and the history closes with the disputes to which this difference of opinion led.—(Acts xxviii. 17-31.)

413. Although Paul was a prisoner himself, he rejoiced to say, "The word of God is not bound." The two years of his imprisonment at Rome were among the most useful and laborious of his active life. Usually he required one or two attendants, as Mark or Timothy, to assist him on his journeys in baptizing and teaching; when confined to his own lodging at Rome, and chained to the soldier by whom he was guarded, Luke, Mark, Aristarchus, Tychicus, Demas, and Epaphras were his messengers to distant parts, and his fellow-labourers in Rome.[1] Every one, Jew or Gentile, was welcomed by the apostle, and the number of his assistants proves that his visitors were not few. Courtiers and slaves, soldiers and civilians, ministers and members of the Church from all parts of the world, visited the apostle in his retirement; officers in Cæsar's household, whether intro-

[1] Phil. ii. 19, 25; Col. iv. 10-14; Philem. 23, 24.

duced to him by Julius, Cornelius, or Sergius Paulus, became members of the Church; Onesimus, a runaway slave from the family of Philemon in Colosse, found his way to the apostle's lodgings, and was converted; Epaphroditus brought a supply of money from Philippi to the apostle, and remained with him some months, but his labours in the cause of Christ proved so severe that his life was despaired of during his stay at Rome; Timotheus also arrived, probably from Asia, bringing an account of the churches in that quarter; but was soon after sent to encourage the Philippian converts. The care of all the churches was still upon Paul, and his labours were not less heavy than when journeying from town to town, or resisting the arguments and scoffs of opponents.

414. But the apostle was engaged in other labours than preaching or exhorting; he sent letters of advice, of warning, and of instruction to several churches in Europe and Asia. The value of his epistles does not lie in their number or length, for only five altogether were written at this time, and a person may read them through in a few hours. Some part of each also is taken up with salutations to friends, or warnings to beware of enemies, and the subjects treated of are thus confined within narrower limits. But the Church has always regarded these few brief letters as an invaluable token of the Divine favour, and a rich legacy of apostolic love. Only a mind like Paul's, chastened and purified by suffering, could have taken the comprehensive grasp of Divine truth which they contain, or clothed its lofty ideas in equally sublime words. Christian faith and duty are expounded with matchless force and clearness; thought is built up on thought until the reader is amazed at the beauty and greatness of the result. Without any attempt at eloquence, there is a grandeur in the ideas, and a propriety about the language, which arrest the attention more powerfully than the elegance of more formal compositions. The apostle writes as one in earnest, and fully convinced of the solemn responsibility of his work; years of reflection on the mysteries of the faith had enabled him to penetrate into their depths as far as the unaided intellect

can; visions, trances, and revelations had taught him the unsearchable glories of the gospel; and a life of incessant toil in the cause of Christ had more warmly endeared to him the truths for which he contended. It would be easy to select many examples in illustration of these points from the epistles, written by the apostle during his imprisonment; but there is one in particular too prominent to be overlooked. When the apostle touches on the person of Christ, he sometimes leaves the argument on hand to expatiate on that exhaustless theme; an instance occurs in Phil. ii. 6-11, where the successive steps of the Saviour's humiliation and exaltation are worthy of attention. Christ Jesus, "in the form of God," and "equal with God," humbled himself by becoming (1.) a servant; (2.) a man, not an angel; and (3.) a lowly, not an exalted man. But his humiliation was not even then complete. He became (4.) "obedient to death;" and (5.) to the shameful "death of the cross." Godhead forms one end of this chain of ideas, the death of criminals another. The exaltation of the Redeemer immediately follows on a similar plan. Passages like the above are scattered throughout these epistles, and shed a flood of light on the highest doctrines of the Christian faith.

415. Whether the accusers of the apostle did not appear at the Emperor's tribunal, or the Christians of the palace exerted themselves on his behalf, is uncertain; but he was liberated after an imprisonment of about two years. Only a few notices of the places at which Paul touched or intended to touch during his subsequent wanderings, can be gathered from his latest epistles. He appears to have proceeded first to Crete, where some time must have been spent in founding churches, and in instructing the new converts. After the apostle's departure, Titus remained to finish the work thus begun by ordaining "elders in every city," and teaching the gospel more fully. It is uncertain what place Paul visited next; but ancient writers relate that he crossed over to Judea, went to Antioch, and then passed through Asia Minor to Colosse, where Philemon had been asked to prepare a lodging for him perhaps a year or two be-

fore.[1] Leaving Colosse he journeyed to Miletus, where Trophimus, one of his companions, remained behind in bad health.[2] Whether the apostle visited Ephesus or not is uncertain; certainly he speaks of "Alexander the coppersmith having done him much evil," and "withstood his words"[3] as if these were recent events. Priscilla and Aquila were then in this city, drawn to it probably by their influence with the members of the church, and the "open door" which it presented for the gospel as the capital of proconsular Asia.[4] Following the route which he pursued on his third journey, Paul sailed from Troas to Philippi, and then travelled to Epirus.[5] He spent the winter at Nicopolis near Philippi, and was at Corinth in the following spring.[6] He may have touched at other places, but Rome is the only city in which the apostle is afterwards found. Persecution was then raging in the metropolis of the world, and Paul may have hurried to the scene of danger, to console the afflicted and encourage the wavering. Or, perhaps, he was passing through it on his way to Spain, after visiting the churches of the East. Nero was then murdering the innocent Christians, to avert from himself the charge of setting the city on fire. Paul was seized and imprisoned. Demas, his faithful attendant during his former residence in Rome, apostatized from the faith and fled to Thessalonica;[7] Tychicus was sent to Ephesus; Phygellus, Hermogenes, and other professors, losing heart in this hour of trial, forsook the apostle; and no one was with the intrepid prisoner at his first examination before Nero. Titus and Crescens, who accompanied him to Rome, had left that city on important missionary work, probably anticipating no danger to their master. Onesiphorus of Ephesus, however, arrived to encourage him by his presence; Luke also and Mark, and Timothy afterwards, cheered Paul when his imprisonment had become strict, and all hope of liberation was gone; but Scripture has thrown a veil over the last scene of the apostle's life, and even the date of his martyrdom is uncertain.

[1] Philem. 22. [2] 2 Tim. iv. 20. [3] 2 Tim. iv. 14. [4] 2 Tim. iv. 19.
[5] 2 Tim. iv. 13; Tit. iii. 12. [6] 2 Tim. iv. 20. [7] 2 Tim. iv. 10.

The difficulties which attend attempts to settle the chronology of the Acts of the Apostles are so great, that it has been deemed advisable to give the most probable dates together in the following table, rather than to insert them in the text. An asterisk attached to a date indicates that it is very generally agreed on:—

A.D. 30 or 31, . . .	Ascension of Christ.
36 or 37, . . .	Stoning of Stephen.
36, 37, or 38, . .	Conversion of Paul.

The interval between the first and second of these dates is, perhaps, too great. The third is fixed so far by the following circumstance: Damascus is supposed to have been in possession of Aretas, king of Arabia, till the second year of Caligula (reigned 37-41, A.D.), when the affairs of that district were settled by the Romans. But the governor under King Aretas threatened Paul's life three years after his conversion, which fixes the date of the latter event as above.

A.D. 39-41, .	Paul's first journey to Jerusalem (Acts ix. 26).
44,* .	Paul's second journey to Jerusalem (Acts xi. 30).
44, .	Vision mentioned in 2 Cor. xii. 2-4.
44,* .	Paul's first missionary journey.

Claudius reigned from 41 to 54 A.D., and Paul visited Jerusalem during a famine which happened in that reign. But of several famines mentioned among the events of these twelve years, one is known to have extended to Syria and Palestine. It happened in the fourth year of Claudius, which fixes the date of Paul's second journey to Jerusalem.

A.D. 49, .	Paul's third journey to Jerusalem (Acts xv.)
52, .	Paul's second missionary journey: reaches Corinth.
54, .	Paul's fourth journey to Jerusalem (Acts xviii. 22).
55-58, .	Paul's third missionary journey: abode at Ephesus.
58, .	Paul's fifth journey to Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 17).
61,* .	Paul arrives in Rome.
67, .	Martyrdom of Paul.

CHAPTER XX.

THE EPISTLES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

416. The epistles of the New Testament are divided into the epistles of Paul, and the catholic or general epistles. Of the former, thirteen, or, including the Epistle to the Hebrews, four-

teen, are extant, and there is not sufficient reason for supposing that there were ever more.[1] Of the latter, there are seven, besides the Revelation, which is also a collection of letters. Three if not four of the apostles were engaged in the composition of these inspired writings: Peter and John, two of the three disciples whom our Lord honoured above the others, Paul, to whom he appeared as one born out of due season, and perhaps Jude. Copies of the epistles of Paul were circulated, according to his own wish, among the churches that he founded, and at length read in places which he never visited. At a very early period these writings of Paul, or as many of them as were then in existence, appear to have been formed into a book; for the apostle Peter speaks as if all the epistles of Paul were familiar to believers. It is difficult to say in what the name *catholic* or *general* originated. The epistles, to which it is applied, were not the joint contributions of all the apostles; the writers discuss particular doctrines and errors; and the letters were addressed not to all churches or believers, but to certain churches and individuals. It appears, therefore, that the name catholic is as little applicable to these seven letters as to those of Paul; probably it originated in the notion that they were addressed to the Church generally by the inspired men who composed them.

417. In all these epistles, the writers look back to the work of Christ as the only ground of hope for men; all of them look forward to his second coming as the time when that work shall be fully accomplished. The prophets of the ancient church had the promises given to former ages for the ground of their faith, and the coming of Christ for their hope: the apostles rested on the triumphs which he achieved, and longed for his second coming. The day of the Lord in the one case, the second coming of Christ in the other, was the point towards which inspired men were taught to look as the haven in which the Church would

[1] 1 Cor. v. 9, "I have written unto you in the letter," *i.e.*, this letter, referring to verses 2-5, not to a former epistle. In Col. iv. 16, "the epistle from Laodicea" is a very different thing from "the epistle to the Laodiceans," of which we read nothing in Scripture. "The epistle from Laodicea" may have been an epistle to some other church, probably Ephesus, which the apostle ordered, by means of the person who carried it, to be sent to Laodicea.

find rest from the stormy waves of time. Prophets and kings and wise men imagined the day of the Lord at hand, when it was still afar off; ages passed away before a definite idea of its distance was revealed; and, in like manner, believers in apostolic times long entertained the hope, that the generation which saw Christ put to death, would also see him come in glory.[1] Daniel, in a book written towards the close of the Old Testament canon, first made known the precise date of Messiah's appearing; and John, the longest-lived among the apostles, and the last link which connected succeeding ages with theirs, first gave the New Testament Church a distinct idea of the remoteness of Christ's second coming. The coming of the Son of man, like the day of the Lord, is used to date the great or terrible events which shall usher in the reign of Christ. When our Lord sat on the Mount of Olives discoursing on the doom of Jerusalem, he referred its overthrow and the general judgment of the world to that solemn coming: the destruction of the Jewish State and people took place partly about 70 A.D., partly about 135 A.D.; and we saw in a previous chapter that the prophets made a similar use of the day of the Lord. The coming of the Son of man is also described as a day of wrath and a day of joy: all nations shall mourn because of him; but the prayer of the elect is, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus;" and they look forward with joyful hopes to "meeting the Lord in the air."

418. The epistles also furnish an insight into the worship and government of the apostolic Church, which cannot be obtained from the historical books of the New Testament. Public worship in those times consisted in reading portions of the Old Testament; in exhortations to holiness, steadfastness, and faith; in relating the discourses and miracles of our Lord; in establishing the truths of the gospel, in prayer, and in singing, or rather repeating psalms.[2] The epistles of Paul were also read in the assemblies of Christians, and copies of them sent from one church to another, though, doubtless, the writings of other inspired men were held in equal honour. The last supper of the

[1] John xxi. 23; 2 Thess. ii. 2, 3; Phil. iv. 5.

[2] 1 Tim. iv. 13.

Redeemer was celebrated in an evening meal called *agapè*, love-feast. The first day of the week, or the Lord's Day, now called the Christian Sabbath, was spent in religious exercises to commemorate the resurrection of Christ. No rules were laid down for the observance of other days, as special seasons of fasting or worship; but some persons scrupulously kept the Jewish Sabbath and the other Jewish festivals, though the apostle Paul considered the observance of these seasons, according to the strict letter of the law, an infringement of his freedom.[1] Fasting was not commanded; but it was practised as a means of repressing the powers of sense, and raising the soul above the world. Celibacy was deemed better suited to the threatening aspect of affairs than a married life; though believers were at perfect liberty to follow their own inclination in these matters. Immorality was punished by exclusion from church privileges, which was called delivering over to Satan; but the guilty persons were again admitted into the Church on giving evidence of repentance and amendment.

419. The names bestowed upon members of the Christian Church in Scripture indicate their privileges and position. As those who received and obeyed the message of Christ, they were believers; as solemnly called out of "the world that lieth in wickedness," they were saints or elect; and, as the sons of a common Father,[2] they were brethren. In relation to them, the rest of mankind were called "this world," and were regarded as under the influence of its god, the prince of the power of the air.[3] Viewed as heirs of the blessings promised to the Old Testament Church, believers were a chosen or peculiar people, and a royal priesthood, having a lot or inheritance of unspeakable value. All were equally partakers of this inheritance (*clerus*, lot or inheritance, hence *clergy*) in the kingdom of God; all were equally priests to offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, but not of atonement; and all stood in the same relation to Christ. They showed their love to each other, and their appreciation of these high privileges, in various ways. In their public assem-

[1] 1 Cor. v. 6-8; Col. ii. 16. [2] Phil. ii. 15. [3] Eph. ii. 2; 2 Cor. iv. 4.

blies or private meetings they saluted each other with the kiss of charity; they were always ready to assist their poor or unfortunate brethren with money, food, or shelter; they entertained members of foreign churches whom business or pleasure might have brought to their city; and they were ever on the watch to act "as members one of another," because members of Christ. Believers in all parts of the world were expected to assist in supporting the poor members of the Church at Jerusalem, for that city was not only the centre from which they received the gospel, but the abode of many strangers from all countries. Another duty laid upon members of the Church was that of supporting the ministers of Christ. In several places, Paul is known to have provided for himself and his assistants by working as a tentmaker; but he never allowed believers to imagine, that his conduct could be brought forward as a reason for refusing to support preachers of the gospel. The funds from which expenses on missionary journeys were defrayed, or the incomes of ministers paid, were thus supplied by the brethren.

420. Scripture does not warrant the belief that the purity of faith and manners in the apostolic Church was entirely without stain. On the contrary, there are not wanting indications of countenance given to immorality in some places, of weakness or backsliding in faith in others, and of disputes in nearly all. The Corinthians turned the Lord's Supper into a riotous feast, disgraced by selfishness and gluttony; in Corinth, Pergamos, and Thyatira, countenance was given to idolatry by church-members partaking of sacrifices in the heathen temple, or at the tables of unbelieving friends; and among the qualifications of a bishop, Paul has included, "not given to much wine, no striker;" but, it should be remembered, that flagrant immorality was then sanctioned by law and custom in many parts of the civilized world. Designing men insinuated themselves into the confidence of believers in several places, persuading them to despise apostolic authority, to indulge in vicious practices,[2] and to receive the imaginings of men as the gospel of Christ. The con-

[1] Rev. ii. 6, 14, 15.

duct of these false teachers was censured in the severest terms by the apostle Paul in his epistles to the Corinthians, to the Galatians, and to Timothy; by the apostle John in his third epistle, and in the letters which he was commanded to write to the seven churches of Asia; by James, and also by Jude. Philosophy, falsely so called,[1] also began at an early period to corrupt the Christian faith, especially in attempts to explain away the doctrine of the resurrection;[2] and the apostle Paul foresaw, that the same morbid desire to pare down all the truths of the gospel to the level of man's understanding would lead to other errors.[3]

421. Those who held office in the Christian Church may be divided into two classes, ordinary and extraordinary ministers. The former embraced bishops, or overseers, as the Greek word is also translated, elders and deacons; the latter embraced the apostles, evangelists, and those who were endowed with the gifts of tongues, of interpretation, and of working miracles. It appears from several passages that the terms bishop or overseer and elder were applied to the same persons in apostolic times;[4] the former was taken from their office of superintending church affairs; the latter from their age, or from the custom of calling the rulers of the synagogue elders. It appears that these ministers were expected to rule as well as teach; and there is reason to believe that while some were unable to do more than rule, others, who were counted worthy of double honour, could also teach.[5] The power of teaching was usually regarded as a free gift of the Spirit, which manifested itself in those who went by the names of prophets, teachers, speakers with tongues. Every Christian community was taught and governed by a council of elders (presbytery),[6] who were ordained by the laying on of the hands of those already in office. There is no ground in Scripture for supposing any difference in official rank among the members of this body; no business could be transacted

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 20.
[2] 1 Cor. xv.; 1 Thess. iv. 13; 2 Tim ii. 18.
[3] 2 Tim. iii.
[4] Acts xx 17, 28; Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii 1, 8; Tit. i. 5, 7.
[5] 1 Tim. v. 17.
[6] 1 Tim. iv. 14.

without a president, and those endowed with greater natural abilities, or occupying a higher position in society than the others, would be raised to this honourable post. It was the duty of the deacons to attend to money matters connected with the Church, to distribute alms among the poor members, and to preach the word when circumstances required. As there was not the same freedom of social intercourse in Palestine and Greece as in modern Europe, an order of deaconesses to wait on female members was also instituted. There are traces, too, of an order of widows, who seem to have been authorized by the Church to visit believers at their own houses, to entertain strangers, to feed the hungry, and to clothe the naked.[1]

422. The apostles, from the very nature of their office, had no successors: no one could be admitted into their society, who was not a witness of all that Jesus had done and taught from the beginning of his ministry to his ascension, unless God directly imparted the knowledge thus obtained by actual intercourse. They were distinguished from all other members of the Church by the power of bestowing spiritual gifts; others might convert and baptize and teach, but recourse was always had to the twelve, except in the extraordinary case of Cornelius, for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The laying on of hands by which these were imparted, is carefully distinguished from the laying on of the hands of the presbytery: the former bestowed power to work miracles; the latter was a solemn setting apart to office: the one was performed only by the apostles, who received the power immediately from the Holy Ghost; the other was performed by all the members of a presbytery, and in one case at least an apostle was thus ordained to special work in the service of Christ.[2] The gift of speaking with tongues was highly prized by church members, probably because the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on both Jews and Gentiles was manifested in this miraculous way. Paul was under the necessity of giving rules to the Corinthian church for guidance in the exercise of this gift; several who possessed it spoke at once,

[1] 1 Tim. v. 9, 10; Acts ix. 39. [2] Acts xiii. 1-3.

and were not only unintelligible but guilty of introducing unseemly confusion into the assembly. He directed them to speak in turn, and to follow the plan pursued in the synagogue, where the interpreter turned what was spoken or read in Hebrew, by a few words at a time into the Aramaic or Greek. Prophecy, whether regarded as a revelation of the future, or an exposition of God's will already revealed, was also a gift of the Holy Spirit, though not so highly prized in Corinth as the gift of tongues: the members who possessed it were called prophets, teachers, and exhorters.

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS—ABOUT 58 A.D.

423. Scripture has not recorded the rise and progress of the church in Rome: it does not even mention by whom the gospel was first planted in that city. The conquest of Judea by Pompey, in 63 B.C., introduced the Romans to an acquaintance with the Jewish religion, and promoted the settlement of Jews in Rome. Synagogues were built in that great metropolis; the Mosaic law was generally known by name at least, if we may judge from the references to Jewish customs in heathen poets; converts were made to the Hebrew faith; people of the highest rank, if not altogether converts, regarded the institutions of Moses with favour;[1] and "strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes," attended the yearly feasts at Jerusalem. The first notice contained in Scripture of the existence of a church in Rome is, perhaps, in Acts xviii. 1, when Paul met with Aquila and Priscilla, who had recently arrived at Corinth from Italy; but it may be doubted whether these two were then believers. If a church existed in Rome before this time, the decree of Claudius, which expelled all Jews from that city, would scatter its members over the world: they must have reassembled, or new converts must have been gained very soon after the death of the emperor (54 A.D.); for Paul, writing in 58 A.D., says, "Their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world," and enumerates several house-

[1] For example, Poppæa, the wife of Nero.

holds among the members of the church. There were two parties among them, as in all the other apostolic churches, a Jewish and a Gentile (i. 13; iii. 1, 9; xiv. 15); but, though Jewish scruples would certainly take offence at the freedom of heathen converts, the disputes which originated on that account were not so serious as to call forth this epistle (iii. 9; xi. 17, 18; xv. 7-13). The apostle had long been anxious to visit Rome (xv. 23); his commission as apostle of the Gentiles extended, above all other places, to that centre of heathen power and wickedness; but he had been prevented from preaching in it. He felt himself bound to let his voice be heard in Rome, just as Peter, a few years afterwards, was constrained to address Jewish churches, which he probably never visited, but of which he was the apostle. Hence Paul offers no apology for sending this letter: it was his duty to write (xv. 15, 16); it was an act of authority which no one could disallow. He would much rather have seen the Roman believers face to face; but, since that could not then be, he let his letter stand in place of a visit.

Various circumstances contribute to prove that the epistle to the Romans was written in Corinth, on the apostle's third missionary journey, about 58 A.D. Gaius, a Corinthian convert (1 Cor. i. 14), was his host; Erastus, the chamberlain of Corinth, sent his salutations to the Romans (Rom. xvi. 23); and Phœbe, a deaconess of Cenchrea, carried the letter to Rome. Paul was preparing to leave Corinth, intending to carry to Jerusalem the collection which the churches of Macedonia and Greece had made for the poor (xv. 26-31). We learn from the Acts that this collection was made on his third journey, and that he intended, when leaving Corinth, to pay Rome a visit on his return from Jerusalem (Acts xix. 22; 1 Cor. xvi. 10, 11). The epistle was therefore written about 58 A.D.

1. Salutation, and statement of the subject—the gospel the power and wisdom of God in saving men (i. 1-17).

2. The doctrines of the gospel in their bearing on man's salvation.

(1.) Inexcusable sinfulness of our race. The heathen have cast off the knowledge of God which reason was fitted to give, and grossly broken every law of the universe (i. 18-32). The Jew, by priding himself on the knowledge of God acquired by revelation, became equally guilty (ii. 1-29). The whole race, therefore, is in a state of sin, from which God alone can deliver it (iii. 1-20).

(2.) The plan of salvation revealed in the gospel.

It excludes all boasting, and saves all, whether Jews or Gentiles, by faith only; it is the same plan on which Abraham, David, and all the saints of the Mosaic dispensation, were justified; it unites believers to Christ; and works in them peace, joy, and hope (iii. 21–v. 21).

(3.) The gospel plan of salvation requires holiness as the evidence of faith (vi. vii.)

The union of believers with Christ makes them dead with him to sin and alive to righteousness; they are free subjects of the King of righteousness, not slaves of sin; and the law to them is both the revealer of sin and their delight after the inward man. But

(4.) Faith also sanctifies and perfects believers, bestowing on them the highest privileges and blessings (viii.)

(5.) The rejection of Israel, however, may seem to throw doubt on the certainty of these blessings (ix. 6), and the apostle proceeds to clear up this part of the Divine dealings with man. He argues that the promises made to the patriarchs were fulfilled; he attributes the enjoyment of blessings to the sovereign election of God without merit on the part of men; he maintains that, since every one is justly deserving of punishment, mercy towards any proves the loving-kindness not the injustice of God; and he shows that the rejection of the Jews with the call of the Gentiles was foretold by the prophets (ix.) The apostle then states that unbelief was the cause of the rejection of his countrymen, pointing out at the same time (1.) that the gospel had been proclaimed among them; and (2.) that the unbelief of the Hebrews in the days of Elijah was a parallel instance. But the apostle shows that this rejection will not be final and utter; Israel shall yet turn to Christ Jesus (x. xi.)

3. Duties which follow from the doctrines expounded. It follows, from the doctrines expounded, that believers ought to devote themselves body and soul to the service of Christ in all the relations of life; as members of the church, as living in the world, and as citizens under authority (xii. xiii.) Especially is their union with Christ seen in the forbearance which they exercise towards one another in things indifferent (xiv. 1–xv. 7).

4. The apostle concludes with remarks of a general nature, and with salutations to members of the church (xv. 8–xvi. 27).

FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS—ABOUT 57 A.D.

424. The city of Corinth was situated on the narrow isthmus connecting the Peloponnesus with Northern Greece, and maintained communications with the sea by the ports of Cenchrea on the eastern, and Lechæum on the western side. In ancient times it was the seat of a flourishing commerce, and was famous through-

out the world for the refinement, learning, and luxury of its citizens. The Isthmian games, to which Paul is supposed to refer in 1 Cor. ix. 24, were celebrated in the neighbourhood, and the temple of Dione or Venus, where the open and authorized wickedness of more than a thousand votaresses shocked even the heathen themselves, stood on the Acrocorinth, a lofty hill overhanging the city. The apostle Paul spent eighteen months in Corinth, when prosecuting his second missionary journey, and founded a Christian church, which soon numbered among its members several well-known citizens. Three or four years elapsed before Paul again visited Corinth; but several important events occurred during that interval. Apollos, after being converted in Ephesus by Aquila and Priscilla, had passed over to Greece, and laboured with much acceptance among the members of the Church of Corinth. When this eminent teacher left, divisions and immoral practices crept into the Church. One party pretended to follow the preaching of Paul; another, of which the principles must have been nearly the same, took its name from Apollos; a third adhered to the teaching of Peter, although there is no reason to believe that he had visited Corinth; and a fourth called itself the "party of Christ." It is not difficult to imagine the views of Christian doctrine entertained by the first three parties. Those who claimed to be the followers of Paul and Apollos advocated freedom from the burdensome ceremonies of Judaism, and maintained the superiority of the Gospel over the Mosaic dispensation. Those who pretended to follow Peter, the apostle of the circumcision, would naturally suppose that many, if not all the precepts of the Mosaic law, were binding upon believers. But it is not easy to determine the opinions which those entertained who called themselves "of Christ." From the allusions to human wisdom, and to the esteem in which its teaching was held by many members of the Corinthian Church, it has been inferred, with considerable show of probability, that this party attempted to effect a compromise between philosophy and faith, by explaining away those doctrines of the gospel, which man's understanding is least willing to re-

ceive in their simple meaning. The treatise on the resurrection contained in 1 Cor. xv., and the severe censures of false teachers in 2 Cor. x. xi., seem to have been directed against this party. The apostle was first informed of these divisions, and of the immoral practices to which they probably led, by the slaves of a Christian woman named Chloe (i. 11), though Fortunatus, Stephanas, and Achaicus (xvi. 17) afterwards gave him fuller information, and proposed to him several questions on which the Church wished a decision. He was then in Ephesus (xv. 32; xvi. 8, 19), and immediately wrote his First Epistle to the Corinthian Church. Apollos, Timothy, and Titus were with him; he was anxious that Apollos should repair to Corinth, but that believer declined; Timothy appears to have been prevented from visiting Greece; and at last Titus was sent with the apostolic letter.

The First Epistle to the Corinthians gives a more complete view of public worship in the apostolic age than any other book of the New Testament. The same apostle, who was inspired to expound the faith of the early church in the Epistle to the Romans, was also permitted in the First Epistle to the Corinthians to hand down to posterity a sketch of public worship as it was then practised, of the relations in which believers stood to the world, and of the duties which they were expected to discharge.

The epistle may be divided into four parts. In the first (i.-iv.), Paul contrasts the wisdom of man with the wisdom of God, showing at the same time that, while the weakness of the former renders it a most uncertain guide in religion, the infallibility of the latter is the only hope of believers. Four different subjects are discussed in this section :—

(1.) Human wisdom; its pride and weakness (i.)

(2.) The Wisdom of God in earthen vessels (ii.)

(3.) The contrast between divine and human wisdom, in which the apostle shows the tendency of the latter to create strife, and the power of the former to build men up into "a spiritual building, acceptable unto God:" the products of the one shall not stand the fiery trial of the judgment day; the building of the other shall then remain unscathed (iii.)

(4.) Human judgment; its weakness and insufficiency. Paul entreats the Corinthian Church not to despise the apostles for the privations they underwent in the service of Christ; they might be "the offscouring of all things," but they were also "stewards of the mysteries of God" (iv.)

The second part of the epistle contains the errors in practice and worship of which the apostle had been informed (v.-xiv.) They may be arranged under the following heads :—

(1.) Of the incestuous person, who having married his step-mother, was required to dissolve the union, or withdraw from the fellowship of the Church (v.)

(2.) Against law-suits before unbelievers (vi.)

(3.) Of marriage. Several queries on this subject had been sent to the apostle, which he examined and answered (vii.)

(4.) Of Christian liberty (viii.-x.) Questions had arisen concerning heathen sacrifices, in which Christian liberty had been shamefully abused, some partaking of them in the temples, and others doing the same at private feasts, though requested to abstain by weaker brethren. These points induced the apostle to enter largely on the general question of Christian liberty.

(5.) Of errors in public worship (xi.-xiv.) Paul condemned under this head the practices of women unveiling and speaking in the churches, of turning the Lord's Supper into a riotous feast, of prizing too highly the gift of tongues, and of unseemly confusion in their assemblies.

The third part of the epistle contains a refutation of a very serious error in doctrine, which had obtained a footing in the Corinthian Church, the denial of the reality of the resurrection (xv.) And the fourth part, after directing the members regarding the collection for poor saints in Jerusalem, gives intimation of the apostle's intended movements, and exhortations to steadfastness in the faith.

SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS—ABOUT 57 A.D.

425. The first letter of the apostle exercised a salutary effect upon the members of the Corinthian Church; they obtained from the incestuous person satisfactory evidence of his repentance, and also obeyed the other commands of the apostle. But the Christ-party appear to have treated the apostolic letter with disdain, denying the right of Paul to interfere, and maintaining as firmly as ever their own opinions. One part of the second letter therefore expresses the apostle's joy at the happy result of the first, another his indignation at the insolence of the false teachers. The difference in sentiment and tone between these two portions of the epistle is so great, that they seem more like different letters than two parts of the same letter.

In the first part (i.-ix.), the apostle takes up the following subjects:—

(1.) The pleasure which he felt on hearing of their ready obedience to his letter, and further details regarding the incestuous person (i. ii.)

(2.) The glory of the gospel, which could produce these results (iii.)

(3.) The lowliness of Christ's ministers on earth, compared with the dignity of their office and the greatness of their reward (iv.-vi.)

(4.) The confidence of the apostle that the Corinthians would obey his commands, especially in making a collection for the poor (vii.-ix.)

In the second part of the epistle (x.-xiii.), Paul warns believers not to be seduced from the faith by men, who pretended to be of Christ,[1] but were anxious only to increase their own power. These false teachers appear to have brought letters of commendation from distant places to members of the Corinthian Church, whose kind reception of them they repaid by insinuating doubts of Paul's authority, and ridiculing his person. The apostle, in the first place, lets it be known that he is perfectly aware of the sayings and doings of these teachers: he passes suddenly from expressions of warm affection to a satirical condemnation of high imaginations, of self-conceit, and of boasting in other men's labours (x.); and then proceeds to exonerate himself from the charges brought by these "deceitful workers" (xi. xii.) They said, for example, that he was inferior to the other apostles, if indeed an apostle at all; appealing for proof to the fact, that he did not require the Corinthians to support him during his long residence in their city. They appear also to have called him a *fool*, and he inquires on what grounds they could boast of superiority. He was a Hebrew as well as they, probably of purer blood; he had passed a life of suffering in the service of Christ; and he had received visions such as were not given to others. In xi. 32, he begins the list of his sufferings, but goes no further than the first; probably he felt that it was useless to compare his own life of unequalled hardships with those of men who never had occasion to sacrifice a single comfort for the gospel of Christ.

In chapter xiii. the apostle briefly states his intention of visiting the Corinthians shortly, and concludes with earnest exhortations to faith and godliness.

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS—ABOUT 57 A.D.

426. It appears from the Acts of the Apostles that Paul twice visited the province of Galatia, once on his second and again on his third missionary journey; but no particulars of either visit have been recorded beyond the brief announcement, that he

[1] 2 Cor. x. 7.

"strengthened all the disciples." As he refers to having preached the gospel in Galatia "at first," or rather "the former time" (iv. 13), it is generally supposed that the epistle was written after his second visit; and as he speaks of the Galatians having "so soon" (i. 6) removed from the gospel of Christ into another gospel, it follows that it was written shortly after he left their country, and probably while he was at Ephesus. Judaizing teachers had persuaded them that Paul was merely a delegate from the church at Jerusalem, and inferior to Peter; they also taught that the Mosaic law was binding on all believers. As soon as Paul was informed of their proceedings and success, he addressed to the churches of Galatia a letter of instruction and rebuke, written apparently with his own hand (vi. 11), to show his love for these misguided converts, and his sense of their danger.

In the first part of the epistle (i. ii.), Paul insists strongly on his authority as a messenger from God, not from men. This obliged him to enter into several historical statements, which showed that he had always acted independently of the other apostles, and had even rebuked Peter for wavering in the faith. In the second part of the epistle (iii. iv.), he discusses the question of justification by faith only, arranging his arguments under the following heads:—

(1.) The Spirit comes by faith, not by works of law (iii. 1-5).
(2.) Faith not the law makes men sons of Abraham (iii. 6-9).
(3.) The law curses to death; faith blesses to life (iii. 10-14).
(4.) The law was after faith and preparatory to it (iii. 15-23).
(5.) Faith bestows the high privileges of (*a*) union with Christ, and (*b*) sonship (iii. 24–iv. 7).
(6.) Expostulations taken from their past love and zeal (iv. 8-31).

In the third part of the epistle (v. vi.), he exhorts believers to cast out the little leaven of Judaism which they had received, to walk in the Spirit, to avoid disputes, and to persevere in well-doing, but not as though they were able to keep the law. The object of this section manifestly is to show that, though believers are bound to obey the precepts of the law, their utmost efforts are insufficient to obtain righteousness by that means.

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS—62 A.D.

427. Five years elapsed between the apostle's last visit to the neighbourhood of Ephesus and the writing of this epistle. The

evils had arisen of which he warned the elders of the Church when he summoned them to meet him at Miletus; "grievous wolves" had entered among them; and "men speaking perverse things" were forming parties by drawing away disciples from the faith. Most appropriately, therefore, Paul addressed to his Ephesian converts a short treatise on the unity of believers in Christ, and the duties to which this privilege bound them. The epistle abounds with references to the oneness of all who love the Redeemer, and deduces from it some very striking illustrations of the comprehensive nature of Christian duty. Christ "is the head of the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all:" believers are "an holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (ii. 22): "Keep the unity of the Spirit," he says again, or "the unity of faith" (iv. 3, 13): "Put away lying, . . . for we are members one of another" (iv. 25): "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord; for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church" (v. 22). These quotations are sufficient to prove the influence of the doctrine, which the apostle discusses in this epistle, on all the relations of life. It is the foundation of Christian faith and practice; to it must every doctrine ultimately be referred, and from it every duty may be enforced.

The epistle, as might be expected from this view of the subject of it, is divided into two parts, a doctrinal (i.-iii.) and a practical (iv.-vi.) In the former, Paul begins with pointing out (1.) the honours bestowed on believers, "Chosen in him before the foundation of the world . . . predestinated unto the adoption of children . . . accepted in the Beloved" (i. 1-12). Next, taking courage from the reports which had reached him of their faith and love, he exhorts the Ephesians (2.) to realize "the hope of Christ's calling, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance" (i. 13-23). A comparison of their past with their present state should especially incline them to this duty and privilege; for (3.) the apostle reminds the Ephesians that they were once "dead in sins, without God, and without hope," but are now admitted to "the fellowship of the saints," and made stones "in the holy temple of the Lord" (ii. iii.) In the second or practical part of the epistle, Paul shows the influence of the great doctrine, that believers are one with Christ, on life

and conduct: "One Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all," were the links of union among church members. Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, were sent to perfect this unity in faith and love. But believers also stand in the relation of witnesses for Christ in the world, and must avoid the sins to which it is addicted.

The Ephesians were grieved when they heard of the imprisonment of the apostle. They appear to have conveyed to him by messengers the expression of their sympathy, and to have informed him of their state, for he exhorted them not to be cast down because he was in bonds. This world is not the place in which believers can relax from the warfare in which they are engaged, to mourn over the sufferings and bonds of friends. "Put on the whole armour of God," exclaims the apostle, "the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit, and the helmet of salvation." Grieve not over my imprisonment, he seems to say, but wrestle for me in prayer with God, and carry forward the work of spreading the truth among men.

Some have supposed that the want of salutations at the end of this epistle, and the ignorance manifested by the writer of the persons whom he addresses, render it unlikely that it was sent to the Ephesians: the words "in Ephesus" (i. 1) are regarded by them as the interpolation of a later age. But salutations at the end of an epistle are not so common as these writers imagine. Paul gave a great number of them in the epistle to the Romans, because he had never visited that city, and wished to show believers that he was well acquainted with them. But there are none at the end of 2 Corinthians or Galatians, and comparatively few in the other epistles of Paul. Besides, it is not improbable that he sent his regards to them by the messengers who came from Ephesus, and were returning. The alleged want of acquaintance with the persons to whom this epistle was addressed is founded on i. 15, iii. 2. In the former of these passages he says, "After I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus," as if it were something new to him: but Paul only means that the messenger from Ephesus had apprised him of their continuance in the faith. The second passage, "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward," does not imply *doubt* as it might at first seem, but *confidence* that they had heard it; *since*, or *forasmuch as*, not *if*. Neither is there any satisfactory reason for regarding "in Ephesus" as a forgery of some later age. Besides, the strain of tenderness and assurance which runs through the epistle is inconsistent with the supposition that Paul was writing to strangers.

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS—ABOUT 63 A.D.

428. This letter, unlike that sent to the Ephesians about the same time, is not a treatise on an important doctrine of the

Christian faith, but an expression of the apostle's love for the Philippians: he was deeply affected by the interest they took in his welfare, and by the sum of money which Epaphroditus brought from them to supply his wants. They had twice assisted him with money when he was in Thessalonica, and once when he was in Corinth; and they had cheerfully borne persecution from the adversaries of the truth (i. 28-30). The epistle was evidently written in Rome (i. 12-14; iv. 22), towards the conclusion of the apostle's first imprisonment (i. 25, 27; ii. 23, 24). Probably, it was carried by Epaphroditus on his return to Philippi (ii. 25).

In the first chapter of this epistle, Paul expresses his thankfulness for the faith and love shown by the Philippian converts during his long absence; and expresses his joy that the gospel was preached by many brethren in Rome, even though he was in prison. So promising was the state of the Church when this letter was written, that some members of the Emperor's household had been converted, and the apostle, feeling as if he might now leave the world without endangering the progress of truth, was in a strait betwixt two, "having a desire to depart and to be with Christ." In the second chapter, the apostle first describes the character of the believer, and then intimates to the Philippians that he would send Timotheus to inquire into the state of matters among them. The apostle is far from suspecting them of breaking any law of Christ; but, knowing that every man requires to be exhorted to steadfastness in the faith, he urges the Philippians to walk as "sons of God." They were so anxious about his prospects of deliverance, that they sent their minister, Epaphroditus, to visit the apostle in Rome; he reciprocated this proof of attachment by promising to send Timotheus, his most valued assistant, to Philippi. In the third and fourth chapters, Paul continues his exhortations to a walk and conversation becoming the gospel, and conveys friendly salutations to several members of the Church.

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS—62 A.D.

429. On comparing this epistle with that to the Ephesians, it is evident that they were written at the same time, and treat in general of the same things. Many passages are the same in words or sentiment in both epistles; and Tychicus also, who carried Paul's letter from Rome to Ephesus, was charged with the delivery of this to the Colossians. Although Paul visited

Phrygia twice, it is doubtful whether he was ever in Colosse, for no certain conclusion on this point can be drawn from chapter ii. 1; but whether Paul ever visited this town or not, he was well acquainted with several members of the church. Epaphras, their minister, visited him in Rome, and seems to have shared his imprisonment (Philem. 23); Archippus, another minister, and Apphia, are also mentioned with affection by the apostle. Onesimus, the slave of Philemon, applied to him at his lodgings in Rome, and a short letter was sent to Philemon himself from the apostle. Epaphras, who took a special interest in the welfare of believers in Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse, Mark, Jesus-Justus, Luke, Demas, joined with the apostle in the salutations addressed to the Colossian Church; and Aristarchus of Thessalonica is mentioned as his fellow-prisoner. At the time when this epistle was written, the Colossian Church appears to have been slightly troubled by Judaizing teachers, who insisted on the observance of the festival days and ceremonial rites of the Mosaic economy. They condemned their fellow-believers for not keeping the Sabbath-day with the strictness required by the law, and they expected Gentile converts to be as scrupulous as the Jews in touching the unclean or eating the forbidden. The apostle, knowing from experience that these teachers, if unchecked, would introduce disorder into the Colossian Church, condemned their teaching as "the rudiments of the world . . . the commandments of men . . . a pretence to wisdom and humility." Another party seems to have been guilty of worshipping angels, and of indulging in vain speculations on matters entirely removed from human knowledge. But the Colossian Church was still comparatively pure, for the apostle rejoiced in "its order, and steadfastness of its faith in Christ."

1. The first two chapters of this epistle explain the nature and blessings of the believer's union with Christ. He is the Head and Maker of all things, appointed to reconcile unholy and hostile men to God by union with himself; he may require his people to testify their love and obedience by suffering or death in his service; but "the full assurance of understanding" of a

blessed immortality will be their hope and reward (i.) Union with Christ keeps believers from being deceived by the false teaching of men, and enables them to estimate the unspeakable value of the triumphs Christ achieved on their account (ii.)

2. The apostle next encourages the Colossians to walk as those whose life was hid with Christ in God: they were one with Christ, renewed after his image, and bound to avoid the ways and passions of the world. The apostle allows no uncertainty to rest on his teaching; the influence of the new creation extends to their fellowship with Christ, and with each other; to the family circle, and to their intercourse with the world (iii. 1-iv. 6).

3. Paul then intimates that Tychicus would give them fuller information regarding his affairs than was contained in the letter; he salutes Archippus, the church at Laodicea, and especially the church in the house of Nymphas, concluding as usual with a general salutation in his own handwriting, to mark the genuineness of the letter.

FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS—52 A.D.

430. The First Epistle to the Thessalonians was written to encourage believers under the heavy trials to which they were exposed, by professing faith in Christ (ii. 14.) It appears, from the Acts and the Epistle together, that Silas and Timothy, after joining Paul at Athens (§ 395), were sent from that town to establish the Church of Thessalonica in the faith (iii. 1-3); but, when the apostle was labouring in Corinth (i. 7), his anxiety for the Thessalonian converts prompted him to send another messenger, who might inform him of the state of things among them (iii. 5). Silas and Timothy arrived shortly after (Acts xviii. 1-5), and gladdened the apostle with cheering accounts of their progress, mentioning at the same time some subjects on which it was desirable to strengthen the faith of the brethren. Paul himself was anxious to visit them; but, finding it unadvisable to make the journey at that time, he sent them a letter, the first that he wrote to the churches.

It was not the design of Paul in writing this letter to discuss a particular doctrine or error, but to exhort his converts to steadfast faith and true obedience. There is therefore less of logical arrangement in this epistle than in others, which were intended to expound gospel truths, or correct dangerous errors. In the first three chapters, the apostle reminds the Thessalonians of the gospel that he preached among them, expresses his joy at its progress in their

church, and at the good example they set before the churches of Macedonia and Greece, and affectionately exhorts them "to increase and abound in love." In the fourth and fifth chapters, he beseeches them to walk as those who were looking forward to the coming of Christ, "as children of the day, not of the night;" and consoles surviving relatives with the assurance, that departed believers would, equally with the living, share in the blessings of that second coming.

SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS—53 A.D.

431. The mention of Christ's second coming in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians, produced great excitement among them; they supposed that event to be at hand, and "were shaken in mind and troubled." Whether this was a false interpretation put upon the apostle words by designing men, or the inference which a persecuted church naturally drew for itself, is uncertain; but, when Paul was informed of the state of things among them, he hastened to correct their mistake. Silas and Timothy had not left him when he received the intelligence (i. 1); Timothy was not again in attendance upon him for several years, and there is no reason to believe that Silas ever travelled in his company afterwards. It is probable, therefore, that the second letter was written from Corinth not long after the first.

After thanking God for the faith and love which the Thessalonians displayed, Paul points out the twofold character of Christ's coming: it will bring rest to the persecuted believer, and vengeance to the oppressor. At the same time, he urges them not to be disturbed as if it were nigh at hand. On the contrary, great and terrible events shall first happen: the Man of Sin shall be revealed, and his daring assumptions of the Divine power and glory shall attain to full growth; but the apostle expresses his belief that that Wicked One, though then in the world, had not succeeded in corrupting the Thessalonian Church (i. ii.) Paul then entreats the prayers of believers for himself in his arduous labours at Corinth, and directs them to rebuke certain busy-bodies, who were introducing disorder into the church, and unrighteously demanding support from its funds (iii.)

FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY—57 A.D.

432. Timothy, as we saw in § 391, was introduced to the apostle Paul by the brethren in Derbe or Lystra, for it is un-

certain to which of these cities he belonged. The recommendations which he then received were fully borne out by his subsequent conduct. Paul always speaks of him in the most affectionate terms as "his own son in the faith" (1 Tim. i. 2); "his beloved son" (1 Cor. iv. 17); "his work-fellow" (Rom. xvi. 21); "his brother" (2 Cor. i. 1), and even alludes to the tears that he shed at parting on one occasion (2 Tim. i. 4). Both his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois were believers; his father was of heathen extraction, but Scripture is silent regarding his religious principles. After travelling with Paul through Asia Minor to Europe, he remained in Berea, when the apostle went to Athens. It is probable that Timothy joined him in the latter city (Acts xvii. 15; 1 Thess. iii. 1), and was then sent to establish the Thessalonian converts in the faith; but he did not continue long among them. After a brief residence in Athens, Paul repaired to Corinth, where his success was so great that Silas and Timothy were summoned from Macedonia to assist him in his labours. The movements of Timothy for several years subsequent to this journey are not recorded; but when Paul left Ephesus, after the uproar of Demetrius, he remained to attend to matters which the hurry of the apostle's departure compelled him to leave unsettled. He soon followed the apostle, for he was in his company when the Second Epistle to the Corinthians was written from Macedonia (2 Cor. i. 1). Timothy appears to have attended the apostle from this time till his return to Asia (Acts xx. 4); but his name is not afterwards mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. It is supposed that he continued to superintend the Church of Ephesus, except when waiting on Paul during his imprisonments at Rome.

433. Critics are not agreed regarding *the time when* and *the place where* the first epistle to Timothy was composed, one party maintaining that it was sent from Macedonia to Ephesus, about 57 A.D., and another assigning it to a journey made after the apostle was released from prison, in 63 A.D. Serious difficulties are encountered on either supposition, but the former is more probable. The only point, on which unanimity prevails,

is that the epistle originated in the commission bestowed on Timothy to settle the Ephesian Church, when Paul withdrew to Macedonia. Perhaps the letter itself is only a summary of the verbal directions given to the youthful disciple (i. 3, 4), which the apostle afterwards committed to writing, either at the request of Timothy himself, or from a feeling that the influence of his assistant would be greatly strengthened, if he could produce written apostolic authority for all his proceedings (iv. 12). It may be thus analyzed :—

1. After the usual salutations, Paul introduces the subject of his letter by referring to the false teachers who then disturbed the Ephesian Church, and to the gospel which it was the duty of ministers to hand down uncorrupted to posterity (i.)

2. He then instructs Timothy on the nature and value of public prayers, and forbids women to teach in churches (ii.)

3. The qualifications of bishops and deacons are next given (iii.)

4. Paul then briefly refers to a great apostasy in the latter times, and exhorts Timothy to acquit himself as a good minister of Christ (iv.)

5. In conclusion, he directs Timothy how to proceed in matters of discipline, according as the accused persons were elders or ordinary members; and gives him some directions for his guidance in dealing with "the questions and strifes," then not uncommon in Ephesus (v. vi.)

SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TIMOTHY—66 A.D.

434. It is evident that this epistle was written in Rome (i. 17), when the apostle was suffering a rigorous imprisonment, and prevented in a great measure from enjoying the fellowship of his friends (i. 8, 16, 17 ; iv. 21). He had been examined once at least before Nero ; and, far from anticipating release from prison, was expecting shortly to be put to death. In the epistles written during the imprisonment mentioned by Luke (Acts xxviii.), Paul manifests a buoyancy of tone, and a confident expectation of release, altogether different from the despondency that runs through this letter to Timothy. Besides, the allusions in the latter to persons and journeys are inexplicable, if supposed to refer to events which happened during the period embraced by the Acts of the Apostles. Thus Paul

speaks of having left Trophimus sick at Miletus (iv. 20), but Trophimus accompanied him to Jerusalem on the last voyage from Miletus recorded in the Acts (Acts xxi. 29). He says also, "Erastus abode at Corinth" (iv. 20), but as Paul had not been in that town for several years previous to his first imprisonment, it is evident that he refers to a recent visit. In iv. 13, Timothy is told to bring some books and a cloak from Troas; but, if these were left on the visit recorded in Acts xx. 5-7, they must have been there for seven or eight years, and would probably have ceased to be of much value. Recourse is, therefore, had to the supposition that the apostle was released from the imprisonment mentioned by Luke (Philem. 22), that he made a journey in which he touched at Troas, Miletus, and other places, that he was imprisoned a second time at Rome, and then wrote this letter to Timothy. It discusses the following matters:—

1. Paul directs Timothy to cultivate an earnest faith in the gospel truths that he preached, to endure hardness in his high calling, and to strive manfully for the believer's crown. Others avoided the apostle in his afflictions, but true brethren were not ashamed of his chain (i. 1-ii. 7).

2. He charges Timothy to beware of foolish questions, such as Hymenæus and Philetus discussed, who denied the reality of the resurrection of the body; he exhorts his assistant to imitate his conduct, not theirs; and forewarns him to prepare for a great falling away, when the apostle should no longer be on the earth to withstand the general corruption (ii. 8-iv. 8).

3. He then communicates to Timothy some information regarding the movements of his friends, and concludes with the usual greetings (iv. 9-22). Alexander the coppersmith, mentioned in this section, was probably the same person whom the Jews put forward in the riot of Demetrius (Acts xix. 33), but different from the Alexander mentioned in 1 Tim. i. 20.

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO TITUS.

435. Titus, an assistant and convert of the apostle Paul, was of heathen parentage (i. 4; Gal. ii. 3); but his birthplace and family circumstances are unknown. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem, when the question of circumcising the Gentiles was laid before the apostles (Acts xv. 2), and he was afterwards the bearer of the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

He rejoined Paul, not at Troas according to agreement, but in Macedonia (2 Cor. ii. 12, 13; vii. 5, 6; xii. 18). His conduct on that mission earned the commendation of his master, who again employed him to carry the second epistle to Corinth, and gave him instructions regarding the collection for the poor of Jerusalem (2 Cor. viii. 16-18, 23). Titus was afterwards sent to establish the churches in Crete, where he was instructed by letter to remain, until he should receive directions to join the apostle at Nicopolis (iii. 12). It is probable that this meeting took place, and that Titus accompanied Paul to Rome immediately before his second imprisonment. He then returned to Dalmatia. According to tradition, the remainder of his life was spent in Crete, where he died at an advanced age.

436. Although Luke has not related any visit of Paul to Crete, except when he touched at that island on his way to Rome (Acts xxvii. 7, 8), it is not impossible that he may have spent some time in it during his previous wanderings; but of this we have no certain knowledge. As there was not time to found churches in Crete on his voyage to Rome, the epistle must have been written during one of the missionary tours related by Luke, or rather on the journey which Paul made after his release from prison. It is evident from the epistle itself that, although the gospel had made considerable progress among the Cretans, the enemies and obstacles it encountered were not few. The depraved disposition of the people, which Epimenides, one of their own poets, severely satirized, and the Judaizing teachers who were making money of the brethren by pretensions to godliness, are particularly condemned (i. 10-12; comp. 2 Pet. ii. 2, 3).

The plan of the epistle is similar to that of the First Epistle to Timothy:—

1. After the usual salutation, Paul describes the true and the false teacher, the one acting as the steward of God, the other teaching for filthy lucre's sake (i.)

2. The apostle then delivers useful rules for the guidance of believers in their daily walk and conversation. Men, who perversely caused divisions (heretics), were to be expelled from the church after two admonitions (ii. 1-iii. 11).

3. The apostle concludes with a few salutations (iii. 12-15).

The two epistles to Timothy and the epistle to Titus are called pastoral epistles, because they relate to duties specially incumbent on pastors or ministers in the discharge of their office.

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON—62 A.D.

437. Philemon, to whom Paul wrote this letter, was a member of the Colossian church, and a convert of the apostle. Believers assembled in his house at Colosse for worship, and Archippus, their minister, was probably his relative. Onesimus, a slave of Philemon, had deserted his service, if he had not also robbed his master (ver. 18), and gone to Rome, where he was converted by Paul. The apostle sent him back to his master with this letter of introduction, urging Philemon, in gentle and persuasive language, to receive the runaway again not as a slave but as a brother beloved, and engaging to make good whatever loss he had caused.

EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE HEBREWS—63 A.D.

438. The epistle to the Hebrews is one of the four epistles of the New Testament to which the writers have not prefixed their names; and the question has long been discussed in the Christian Church, By whom was it written? The claims of Paul, of Barnabas, of Apollos, and of others, have been put forward for this honour; but modern criticism has confirmed the nearly general belief of antiquity, that it was written by the apostle Paul. Various reasons, taken from the book itself, are given in support of this opinion. *First*, the great doctrine on which Paul always insisted was justification by faith, with the subordinate and preparatory use of the law: these are also the points discussed in the epistle to the Hebrews. But, *second*, many forms of expression and figures of speech used by Paul, or peculiar to his writings, are also found in this epistle. The following are examples:—"The God of peace" (xiii. 20; Rom. xv. 33); "the

Mediator" (viii. 6; Gal. iii. 19, 20); "the image of God" (i. 3; Col. i. 15-20; Phil. ii. 6); the Word of God is compared to *a sword* (iv. 12; Eph. vi. 17); the Christian life to *a race* (xii. 1; 1 Cor. ix. 24), and the natural man to *a slave* (ii. 15; Gal. v. 1). It cannot be denied, however, that the writer of this epistle uses words either not found elsewhere, or employed in senses altogether different from their meanings in other places; the word *death*, for example, is not applied with the same breadth of meaning as in the epistles of Paul, but a passage in which it occurs bears a considerable resemblance to one in the epistle to the Ephesians (Heb. ii. 15; Eph. ii. 1-6); the word *house* is used to denote the Mosaic or Christian economy, but Paul usually employs temple or building (iii. 5, 6); and the term *priest*, here applied to Christ, was never used by Paul in his speeches and letters to the Gentiles. In reply to objections founded on these facts, it is enough to observe that the apostle frequently uses words not found elsewhere, and clothes well-known expressions in a new dress. Another point of resemblance between the style of Paul and that of the person who wrote this epistle is in their manner of quoting from the Old Testament. Both fortify their statements by bringing together several quotations from different parts of the Hebrew Scriptures (i. 5-14; Rom. iii. 10-18); and both treat the same passages with an originality of conception, which goes far to prove identity of authorship (ii. 8, comp. 1 Cor. xv. 27; x. 38, comp. Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii. 11).

439. It appears from the epistle itself that it was addressed to Jewish believers, resident, according to ancient tradition, in Palestine, if not in Jerusalem. They were surrounded by temptations to unbelief and apostasy (vi. 1-9; x. 25-31); and were threatened with, if they were not then suffering, heavy afflictions for the gospel (x. 32-34; xii. 4-8; xiii. 3, 14). Paul, therefore, dissuades them from returning to Judaism, and exhorts them to maintain the doctrines and obey the precepts of Christ. The letter was sent from Italy (xiii. 24); and the writer, though unable to visit them at the time, expected to do so shortly after

(xiii. 18, 19): these facts fix the date of the epistle at 62 or 63 A.D., immediately before the release of Paul from his first imprisonment. The line of argument adopted by the apostle was as follows:—

The ceremonial worship of the Jewish Church was outwardly far more splendid than public worship in the assemblies of believers; and there was therefore reason to fear that the magnificence of the former might, in times of persecution, exercise an undue influence in withdrawing men of weak faith from the latter. Paul met the danger by pointing out the spiritual greatness of the gospel, its superiority over the law in satisfying the soul, and the undoubted fact, that the Mosaic enonomy was a system of types and shadows, designed to usher in the glorious dispensation of the Gospel of the grace of God.

1. The greatness of Christ (i.-x.)
   (1.) His godhead and mediatorial kingdom (i. 1-3).
   (2.) His superiority over angels, even though a man (i. 4-ii. 18).
   (3.) His superiority over Moses: the latter was a servant in establishing the Old Testament economy; Christ is the Son and Heir of the Father (iii.)
   (4.) His superiority over Joshua: the latter partially fulfilled the promises by giving Israel rest in Canaan; Christ completely fulfilled them by purchasing for his people an eternal rest (iv.)
   (5.) His superiority over the high priest: this, the principal point discussed in the epistle, is shown in several respects:—
      (*a.*) Both were men, who could sympathize with human weakness; but Christ was without sin (iv. 14-v. 3).
      (*b.*) Both were called of God to their office; but Aaron was never addressed in such language as, "Thou art my Son" (v. 4, 5).
      (*c.*) Christ was a high priest after the order of Melchisedec, an order more ancient and more honourable than that of Levi. Abraham was blessed by that priest, and gave him tithes: the covenant of which Jesus was made surety, was better than the Mosaic, and designed to replace it: Christ ever liveth to intercede for his people, and required to make only one sacrifice for sins. Under this head, the apostle shows that the sacrifices and rites of Jewish worship were types or figures of the work of Christ (v. 6-x. 39).
2. The power of faith (xi.-xiii.)
   (1.) Examples of it are quoted from ancient history (xi.)
   (2.) The higher privileges of believers should encourage them to show greater faith, and to yield a readier obedience than the saints of the Old Testament (xii. xiii.)

Readers of this epistle cannot fail to mark the rousing nature of the appeals with which the inspired writer usually sums up his arguments. At one time he encourages in the stirring language of triumphant faith; at another, he animates to battle with the world in words which sound like the war-trumpet before the deadly struggle; and at a third, he warns with the solemn earnestness of a man fully conscious of the danger of rejecting Christ.

GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES—ABOUT 61 A.D.

440. The writer of this epistle was James, the brother of our Lord, whom his unbelieving countrymen called *the just*, from the strictness with which he observed the law of Moses. Whether he was the same person with James the son of Alphæus, and one of the apostles, is a point on which great difference of opinion prevails, and which it is probably now impossible to settle. The letter was addressed to the Twelve Tribes, and bears a strong resemblance to the writings of the ancient prophets, in the copious use of striking figures, and in the strong language with which sin is exposed and condemned. Like all the other books of the New Testament, it is written in Greek, though addressed to Hebrews. As the letter contains manifest allusions to the teaching of Paul on justification by faith, it was probably not written till the epistles to the Galatians and Romans became generally known throughout the Church (2 Pet. iii. 15, 16). According to Josephus, James was stoned as a breaker of the laws by order of the Sanhedrim, during the interval between the death of Festus and the entrance of Albinus on office (62 A.D.); the respectable citizens were shocked at the cruelty of the deed, and alarmed at an assumption of authority forbidden by the Romans. It is probable, therefore, that the epistle was written about 61 A.D.

The design of the Epistle of James was to exhibit the true "faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" (ii. 1), in contrast to the errors with which it had been corrupted in his day.

1. The true faith is perfected by trials (i. 2, 3), which work patience and earnest prayer in the believer (i. 1-15).

2. The true faith is a good gift bestowed by God, who looks for the fruits

of it from believers. These fruits consist in doing, not merely hearing, his word (i. 16-26), and are such as the following:—

(1.) Pure religion has no respect of persons. It does not teach fawning submission to the rich, or disregard of the poor. The law of love, the royal law, or the law of liberty, is the believer's guide in all things (ii. 1-13).

(2.) True faith is altogether different from dead faith. Paul preached a living, fruitful faith; false teachers pretended that he meant a cold assent to Gospel truths: the former always insisted on a faith which showed its sincerity and strength by corresponding works; the latter denied the necessity of works as an evidence of faith. James brought the Church back to the teaching of Paul by showing that faith and works are as inseparable in the believer, as body and soul in a living man (ii. 14-26).

(3.) Pure religion requires the due government of the tongue (iii. 1-12).

(4.) The true faith requires believers to be at peace with one another, and condemns envy and pride (iii. 13-iv. 17).

(5.) The true faith, like ancient prophecy, denounces woes against injustice at the coming of the Lord, and encourages oppressed believers (v. 1-8).

(6.) In conclusion, James exhorts his readers from the examples of Job and Elias, to walk as those who expected Christ's second coming, by abounding in love and prayer (v. 9-20). In v. 12, the inspired writer informs the brethren that they ought not to use the forms of oath then current in the world; and in v. 14, the unction of the sick by the elders, agreeably to apostolic practice (Mark vi. 13), is recommended. The approaching destruction of Jerusalem is perhaps referred to under the phrase "coming of the Lord."

FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER—ABOUT 63 A.D.

441. Peter, the writer of this epistle, calls himself an apostle of Jesus Christ (i. 1), and an elder (v. 1). His name originally was Simon Bar-Jonas—that is, son of John; he was a fisherman of Bethsaida (fishing-house), but he appears to have resided in Capernaum after his marriage.[1] Peter was naturally of an ardent temperament, forward to express what he felt on the first view of a subject, and therefore more ready to fall into errors than the other apostles. Jesus was repeatedly under the necessity of checking this tendency to rashness of speech, and once

[1] Matt. viii. 5, 14.

even addressed to him the strong rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Love for his Master, and a profound but imperfect sense of his dignity, led the apostle into these mistakes. A great change is evident in his character after the outpouring of the Spirit. There was the same forward boldness which fitted him, in the judgment of man, to guide the infant Church of Christ in its first conflicts with the world; there was equal vigour in action, which was then of more consequence than the stronger power of apprehending truth possessed by his fellow-apostle John; and there was also the same humility in confessing his faults, when they were brought to his knowledge. But he showed an amount of prudence in regulating the affairs of the Church, and in defending the truth of Christ, which those, who form their idea of Peter from the Gospels only, are not prepared to expect. In the difficult matters which he had to settle, without consulting the other apostles, or in which they looked to him especially for advice, he acted with such wisdom and caution that the Church was edified, and opponents were silenced. The high place that he held among believers is shown by the facts that Matthew calls him "first" in the apostolic college, that he was repeatedly chosen or allowed to express the sentiments of the twelve, and that he was at last set apart as pre-eminently the apostle of the circumcision. The evangelist Luke has preserved no record of his labours after the apostolic council in 52 A.D.; but it is known from other inspired sources that he afterwards visited Antioch, and wrote his first epistle when residing in Babylon. According to several ancient writers, he suffered martyrdom at Rome, in 67 A.D.

442. The First Epistle of Peter was written in Babylon, and carried by Silvanus to the strangers (Hebrews) scattered throughout proconsular Asia and the neighbouring provinces (v. 12, 13). A fiery persecution had already tried their faith (i. 6, 7; iii. 16; iv. 12); the heathen spoke against them as evil-doers (ii. 12), although they were only charged with being Christians (iv. 16); and a fiercer storm was threatening to burst upon the Church (iv. 17). It is supposed that the inspired writer refers to the

persecution under Nero, but it is probable that he alludes to the harassing complaints usually made in all places against believers, and to the approaching miseries of the Jewish nation (i. 7 ; iv. 7).

It was the design of this epistle to comfort believers under their sufferings, to remind them of their privileges and duties, and to forewarn them of the approaching ruin of the people of Israel. Many of the words and sentiments it contains are thought to have been borrowed from the writings of Paul ; but these supposed quotations are either accidental coincidences in words and phrases, or forms of expression common in the public worship of the early church. Peter begins his letter with the usual apostolic salutation, and then states the high privilege of receiving the gospel, with the consequent duty of obeying its precepts, even at the risk of life itself (i. 1-12). Believers are bound to avoid all worldly courses, to walk in fear, and to grow in grace (i. 13-ii. 10). As good subjects of Jesus, they are also commanded to be good subjects of earthly kings (ii. 11-17), to be faithful domestics or slaves notwithstanding the blows they may receive (ii. 18-25), to discharge in the fear of God the duties of married life (iii. 1-7), and to acquit themselves generally as "dead to the flesh, but alive to the will of God" (iii. 8-iv. 6). One thing, especially, that ought to support them under tribulation, and prompt them to an unwearied discharge of duty, is the appearing of Christ, the Chief Shepherd (iv. 7-v. 14).

SECOND EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER—ABOUT 66 A.D.

443. The Second Epistle of Peter was addressed to the same churches as the First (iii. 1), and treats generally of the same subjects : the earnestness with which believers are exhorted, and the vehemence with which false teachers are censured, correspond to the well-known character of the writer. As the second letter of Paul to the Thessalonians was intended to correct the false impressions drawn from the first, regarding the coming of Christ, so the Second Epistle of Peter appears to have owed its origin to a similar cause. False teachers in the churches denied that the end of all things was at hand, and scoffingly asked for the promise of Christ's coming : believers were disturbed, and many were seduced into sin. As it was the object of the apostle to correct these errors, he gives convincing evidence of the truth of the gospel (i. 16), especially as his approaching death would render an appeal to him no longer possible (i. 13).

1. The apostle encourages believers to cultivate all Christian graces, for the want of them leads to the blindness which it was the object of his letter to condemn (i. 1-11).

2. To encourage them in their faith he states that they were not following cunningly-devised fables, but truths witnessed to by the Father's voice from heaven, and by the fulfilment of prophecy (i. 12-21).

3. False teachers, who did not understand his epistle and preaching (ii. 10-12), presumptuously doubted the truths he imparted; they loved the "wages of unrighteousness" like Balaam, and seduced the weak by their "swelling words of vanity." They pretended that there were no signs of Christ's coming; but Peter showed (1.) that scoffers might have used the same argument in Noah's days; and, (2.) that sooner or later the promise of Christ's coming, like all his other promises, would be fulfilled (ii. 1-iii. 10).

4. In conclusion, Peter exhorts believers to regulate their lives by the prospect of that day of wrath (iii. 11-18).

FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN.

444. Although the writer of this epistle has not given his name, it is generally allowed that the close resemblance in words and sentiments between it and the Gospel of John, proves beyond doubt that both of them were written by the same person; the second verse of the Epistle is supposed indeed to refer to the Gospel. Early Christian writers unanimously ascribed this letter or treatise to the apostle John. It was manifestly the design of the writer to guard believers against errors, which, though then only in the bud, afterwards ripened into dangerous heresies. False prophets had gone out into the world; they seduced many from the faith by the speciousness of their teaching; and the apostle required to lay down several rules by which the Church might distinguish true from pretended brethren. One party, probably Jews, denied the Messiahship, and therefore the godhead of the Redeemer (ii. 22; iv. 15; v. 1); another affirmed that Jesus Christ had not come in the flesh, denying his humanity, and maintaining that what seemed to be his body was an illusion (i. 1, 3; iv. 3). The inspired writer opposed these heretics with the earnest vehemence of a man who understood the dangerous tendency of their teaching, and keenly felt the indignity it offered to his Master. The believers

to whom this letter was addressed, had often heard that the coming of Antichrist was the great mark of the last time (ii. 18), and that its spirit was even then in the world (iv. 3). If this epistle was sent to the churches in and around Ephesus, as is commonly thought, the apostle probably referred in these passages to the preaching of Paul, the founder and teacher of the Ephesian church (comp. 2 Thess. ii. 7). He adds, however, that there were many antichrists—that is, false teachers, who, by putting themselves *in place of* (anti) Christ, as instructors of the Church, set themselves *against* (the other meaning of *anti*) his honour and dignity: the apostle also gives a rule by which believers may recognise them (ii. 22). The indignation with which John regarded heretical teaching was curiously shown in his conduct towards Cerinthus, who denied the divinity of Jesus: he fled in terror with his friends from the public baths of Ephesus on seeing the heretic enter, lest the building should fall on them.

It was stated in a former chapter that the apostle John withdrew from Jerusalem to Ephesus, about 60 A.D., and that he continued to reside there till the close of his life. It is supposed that his three epistles were composed in that town; but it is impossible to determine their dates. Several critics, founding on 1 John ii. 18, maintain that the first epistle must have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem; others have drawn precisely the opposite inference from the same passage. That epistle may be thus analyzed:—

1. On union with Christ.
   (1.) The fellowship of believers with Christ is a fellowship in life and light (i. 1-7).
   (2.) Union with Christ, the advocate and propitiation of the whole world, cleanses from all sin (i. 8-ii. 2).
   (3.) Marks of this union are then given. Believers keep the commandments of Christ, especially that old and yet new, or ever-fresh law of love which he laid down; they are on their guard against evil spirits or seducers, and walk so that they "may not be ashamed before him at his coming" (ii. 3-28).
2. On the sonship of believers.

Those that are born of God are known by these marks:—

   (1.) "Every one doeth righteousness, and purifieth himself even as he is pure" (ii. 29-iii. 15).

(2.) Believers lay down their lives, or give their goods for the brethren (iii. 16-18).

(3.) They enjoy "the answer of a good conscience toward God" (iii. 19-24).

(4.) They try all teachers, and follow only the true (iv. 1-6).

(5.) Believers alone show true brotherly love in Christ (iv. 7-v. 5).

3. The witness of God.

Believers have within themselves the assurance that they shall enjoy eternal life, and they have a proof of its reality in the answers which they receive to prayer (v. 6-21). The passage (v. 7, 8), in which mention is made of the three witnesses, has excited much controversy among the learned; it was probably not written by the apostle, but interpolated by a later hand.

SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES OF JOHN.

445. The Second Epistle of John was a private letter to a Christian lady, named Electa or Curia, and contains, in a small compass, the substance of his first epistle. The apostle expresses his joy at the piety of her children, exhorts her to observe the old but new commandment of love which Christ gave to his disciples, and warns her to beware of the deceivers who denied the incarnation of the Redeemer. With the vehemence which the apostle always showed when the honour of his Master was attacked, he tells the lady to have no dealings with these deceivers, and not even to interchange with them the ordinary salutations of life.

446. The Third Epistle of John was also a private letter to a believer named Gaius or Caius, who had been converted, or at least instructed, by the apostle (4). The name was so common that those are probably in error who imagine that Gaius, the host of Paul at Corinth (Rom. xvi. 23), and this person were the same individual. The apostle contrasts his love in entertaining strangers, but especially preachers of the gospel, with the conduct of Diotrephes, who neither received ministers himself nor allowed others to entertain them. He then commends Demetrius, and promises to visit the church shortly. Probably Caius and Demetrius had resisted the proceedings of Diotrephes, and were encouraged by this epistle to persevere in well-doing.

447. In both letters the apostle styles him an "elder;" Peter called himself a "fellow-elder" with other ministers (1 Pet. v. 1).

GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE.

448. It was the design of the epistle of Jude to warn believers against certain members of the church (12), who, under pretence of teaching the brethren, seduced them from the faith (4), encouraged vice (15, 16), resisted the apostles (11, 17), and made gain of pretended godliness (11). Their character and doom are sketched with a vehemence and imagery, which resemble the writings of the prophets. Who they were, and when or where they flourished, it is now impossible to ascertain; but it is evident from the epistle that they had attained to considerable influence in the church. After a general salutation (1-3), Jude points out to believers the danger of listening to these "ungodly men," whom history and prophecy alike condemned (4-23), and commends the Church to the gracious protection of its Head (24, 25).

It is a matter of doubt whether Jude, the brother of James, who wrote this epistle, was a brother of our Lord or an apostle, if these were different persons. From the manifest resemblance between this epistle and the Second of Peter (but especially 2 Pet. ii.), it is generally supposed that the one of them was borrowed from the other. Those who entertain this opinion seem to have forgotten, that Peter and Jude probably laboured in company for many years, and would therefore naturally express themselves, regarding false teachers, in the terms commonly employed by apostles and ministers in Jerusalem (17, 18).

THE REVELATION OF JOHN.

449. This book was written by the apostle John in the reign of Domitian (81-96 A.D.) He states that he was then in Patmos, a prisoner for the gospel's sake, in the persecution which was set on foot by that cruel tyrant. Several traditions of his sufferings during the persecution have been preserved; but they

are manifestly forgeries by a later age: the very fact of his banishment in the reign of Domitian has been denied by many, who assign it to the end of Nero's reign (67 or 68 A.D.) The Revelation may be thus analyzed:—

1. A collection of seven letters to the principal churches of proconsular Asia (i.-iii.)

A vision of the Divine glory of Christ forms the introduction to these letters. Each of them consists of a preface founded on some attribute of Christ, a warning or a reproof or an encouragement, according to circumstances, and promises of rewards to faithful obedience. Philadelphia is especially distinguished for its steadfastness and purity.

2. The seven seals.

A vision of the Divine glory, of the book sealed with seven seals, and of the Lamb who alone was worthy to open the seals, introduces the revelation of the things which shall be hereafter (iv. v.) The spread of the gospel and the triumphs of the Lamb are seen on the opening of the first six seals (vi. vii.) The opening of the seventh seal is then described: an angel appears offering incense at the altar, and the first six trumpets are sounded. Before the sounding of the seventh trumpet, a mighty angel was seen with a little book open in his hand, which John was commanded to eat, after seven thunders uttered their voices; the temple also was measured, and the two witnesses died and rose again (viii.-xi.)

3. The three enemies of the Church—Satan, or the great red dragon, the beast, and the false prophet.

The war in heaven between Michael and Satan; the preservation of the woman, that is, the Church; the rising of one beast out of the sea, and of another out of the earth; and the vision of the Lamb with the 144,000 on Mount Zion, are then described (xii.-xiv.)

4. The seven vials with the seven last plagues (xv. xvi.)

5. Overthrow of the three enemies of the Church.

Babylon the Great, under which Rome and the Papacy are manifestly described, though this is denied by many, is seen under the image of a harlot; an angel proclaims her fall; songs of joy for the marriage of the Lamb are heard in heaven; and the "Word of God" appears triumphing over all his enemies (xvii.-xx.)

6. The new Jerusalem is described (xxi. xxii.)

APPENDIX.

EVENTS IN JEWISH AND PROFANE HISTORY—404-4 B.C.

B.C.

404-358. Artaxerxes Mnemon, under whom Nehemiah visited Jerusalem a second time, king of Persia.

377-374. Judea was the rendezvous of the Persian army of 220,000 men destined for the conquest of the revolted Egyptians.

373-364. Death of Joiada the high priest. Jonathan or Johanan succeeded. Jesus, another son of Joiada, was nominated to the priesthood by Bagoses, the Persian general commanding in the province, but was murdered by Johanan in the temple. Bagoses then forced his way into the sanctuary, and exacted from the Jews a tribute of £50,000 a year for seven years.

358-338. Darius Ochus, king of Persia.

356. Alexander the Great born at Pella in Macedonia.

351. The Phœnicians revolted from Persia, but were at last conquered by Ochus. The king then invaded Egypt, which he thoroughly subdued after it had been governed by native princes for 64 years: ever since, it has been subject to foreigners. Ezek. xxix. 13-16 was fulfilled by this conquest.

351. Jericho was taken by Ochus on his march to Egypt, and many of the inhabitants were sent as captives to Hyrcania: the reason is unknown.

341. Jaddua, high priest.

338. Bagoas, an Egyptian eunuch, poisoned Ochus, and slew all his sons except Arses, whom he placed on the throne.

336. Arses also was poisoned, and Darius Codomanus, a descendant of Darius Nothus, (§ 199,) received the kingdom from Bagoas. The regicide himself was put to death soon after.

334. Alexander crossed the Hellespont, and in six campaigns conquered all the Persian empire.

332. Tyre refused to submit, trusting to its insular position and strong walls. Alexander took the city by constructing a causeway from the shore to the island with the ruins, which Nebuchadnezzar had left

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after sacking old Tyre. The predictions of Ezekiel were thus fulfilled (xxvi.-xxviii.) Gaza was next besieged by Alexander. It was taken after an obstinate resistance; the citizens were murdered or sold for slaves; and Betis, the governor, was dragged round the walls at the chariot of the conqueror, Zech. ix. 5. Alexander then visited Jerusalem; offered sacrifices in the temple; exempted the Jews from tribute every Sabbath year; and allowed them to live according to their own laws. The Samaritans were expelled from Samaria for insubordination, and a Greek colony planted in that city.

323. Death of Alexander at Babylon. Disputes and wars immediately broke out among his generals, and twenty years elapsed before the empire was again restored to tranquillity and order.

320. Ptolemy, one of Alexander's generals, gained possession of all Palestine, and offered sacrifices in the temple. He took many thousands of the Jews from their own country to Egypt, whom he treated with such kindness, that a great number afterwards emigrated of their own accord. So faithfully did they observe their oaths, that he even employed Jewish soldiers to garrison his fortresses.

301. The battle of Ipsus decided the fate of Alexander's empire; it was divided as follows:—Macedonia and Greece were allotted to Cassander; Thrace and Bithynia to Lysimachus; Egypt and Palestine to Ptolemy; and Mesopotamia, Babylonia, with many other provinces, to Seleucus.—Dan. viii. 8, 21, 22; vii. 6.

300. Simon the Just, high priest. The Jews regard him as the last of the great synagogue, or men who collected and revised the Old Testament Scriptures.

292. Eleazar, high priest. He is said to have first studied the traditions and brought them into repute. About this time many Jews settled in Alexandria, Antioch, and other places, where the kings gave them the same rights of citizenship as the Greeks.

285-250. The Septuagint Version made.

260. Antigonus Socho, president of the Sanhedrim, died. He was the most learned Jew of his age, and introduced the "Traditions" as an addition to the law of Moses.

249. Antiochus Theos, king of Syria, was forced to make peace with Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt; he promised to repudiate his wife Laodice, and marry Berenice, the daughter of Philadelphus. The latter was conducted to Syria by her father in person.—Dan. xi. 6.

247. Philadelphus died. Berenice was repudiated by Antiochus; Laodice was again made queen, but she murdered both her husband and her rival two years after. Ptolemy Euergetes, the brother of Berenice, then marched a large army into Syria, slew the queen, conquered the whole country as far as the Tigris, levied heavy contribu-

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tions, and carried to Egypt about 2500 images, of which Cambyses (§ 199) had spoiled that country.—Dan. xi. 7-9.

245. Euergetes offered many sacrifices in the temple.

219. Antiochus the Great, king of Syria, captured Seleucia from the Egyptians (Dan. xi. 10), and overran great part of Palestine.

217. Ptolemy Philopater, king of Egypt, defeated Antiochus at Raphia, between Gaza and Rhinocolura, and recovered all that had been lost.—Dan. xi. 11.

216. Philopater then visited Jerusalem, and attempted to force his way into the Holy of holies. On his return to Alexandria, he proposed to destroy all the Jews of that city.

202. Antiochus the Great took possession of Phœnicia and Palestine during the minority of Ptolemy Epiphanes, king of Egypt. He also captured Gaza, and was admitted into Jerusalem by the Jews (Dan. xi. 13, 14), who threw off the allegiance they had formerly paid to Egypt.

193. The young king of Egypt married Cleopatra, the daughter of Antiochus, and received Palestine as her dowry. She proved more faithful to her husband than to her father.—Dan. xi. 15-18.

191. Antiochus crossed over to Ætolia to prosecute the war with the Romans: Hannibal, the Carthaginian general, was in his suite. The king was unfortunate; his army and fleet were both defeated; and at last he was compelled to accept a humiliating peace. He was killed in an insurrection, excited by his attempt to plunder the temple of Elymais.—Dan. xi. 18, 19.

186. Seleucus Philopater succeeded. He sent his general Heliodorus to plunder the temple, but the attempt failed (176).—Dan. xi. 20.

175. Heliodorus poisoned Seleucus, and usurped the throne. Antiochus Epiphanes, the brother of Seleucus, persuaded Eumenes, king of Pergamos, to assist him in expelling Heliodorus, and gaining the crown. He is the "vile person" of Daniel's prediction (xi. 21). Jesus, or Jason, the brother of the high priest Onias, became a heathen, and persuaded Antiochus to deprive his brother of the priesthood, and confer it on himself: many Jews forsook the religion of their fathers, but the nation generally did not approve of their doings.

171-169. Antiochus invaded Egypt, and by a mean artifice gained possession of the northern part of that kingdom (Dan. xi. 23). Ptolemy Philometor, the king, fell into his hands; he was treated as a friend, and admitted to the table of Antiochus (Dan. xi. 27). A sedition in Jerusalem, originating in a report that he was dead, was exaggerated into a general rebellion; the king immediately returned to Palestine, took Jerusalem by storm, and killed 80,000 persons in the siege and sack of the city. The temple was plundered, and swine were sacrificed on the altar.

167. The Romans interfered to prevent Antiochus from attacking Egypt.

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A division of his army was then sent against Jerusalem; its inhabitants were slaughtered on the streets, and the daily sacrifice ceased to be offered. Soon after the temple was dedicated to Jupiter Olympius, and a new altar erected, "the abomination of desolation" (Dan. xi. 31); it was a capital crime to observe the laws of Moses, and every copy of the Scriptures that could be seized was destroyed. At last a rebellion broke out at Modin, near the sea-shore, headed by a priest named Mattathias. On his death (166 B.C.), his third son, Judas, surnamed Maccabæus (Hammerer) succeeded to the command, and after a series of brilliant achievements, drove the enemy in a great measure out of the country, secured the independence of Judea, and (164 B.C.) purified the temple three years and a half after its profanation Antiochus died in great misery when on the road to avenge the disasters of his generals (163, B.C.)

160. Demetrius Soter, king of Syria, marched a large army, under Bacchides, into Palestine. The country was ravaged; Judas was killed in an attack on the enemy; the apostate Jews seized the government, and a famine reduced the people to great distress.

154. Alexander Balas, who pretended to be a son of Antiochus Epiphanes, claimed the throne of Syria; raised an army, and killed Demetrius in battle. Jonathan, the youngest brother of Judas Maccabæus, played his part so well in the struggle that Balas appointed him high priest, and conferred other honours upon him. The high priesthood was thus transferred to the family of the Asmonæans, who continued to enjoy it till the time of Herod.

149. Onias, a descendant of Aaron, after attaining to the honours of commander-in-chief and prime minister at the court of Egypt, persuaded King Ptolemy Philometor that it would be of advantage to keep the Jews, who had settled in his dominions, from worshipping at Jerusalem, by building a temple in Egypt. A site was given at Leontopolis, and a temple built after the model of that at Jerusalem.

143. Jonathan was treacherously murdered by Trypho, a Syrian general. His brother Simon assumed the priesthood, and renewed the treaty with Rome made by Jonathan. In the same year, the independence of the Jewish nation was ratified by Demetrius, king of Syria.

135. Simon was basely murdered at Jericho.

135-106. John Hyrcanus, the son of Simon, succeeded, and, in consequence of the growing weakness of the Syrian kings, he was able to throw off entirely the allegiance which the Jews had long paid to them. He conquered the Samaritans; he incorporated the Idumeans with the Jews by forcing them to submit to the laws of Moses; and, though a Pharisee for the greater part of his life, he at last became a Sadducee, which afterwards caused great disasters to his family.

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106. Aristobulus I., the son of John, succeeded. He appears to have been the first of these princes who assumed the title of king.

104-77. Alexander Jannæus succeeded his brother Aristobulus. He belonged to the Sadduceean or unpopular party. In 94 B.C., the Pharisees raised a sedition in the temple, in which 6000 of them were killed by the foreign mercenaries of the king. A more serious rebellion afterwards broke out; the army of Jannæus was defeated with great slaughter (88 B.C.), and he himself forced to flee to the mountains. He was again enabled to take the field, and secured the tranquillity of the kingdom by a savage ferocity, which gained for him the title of "the Thracian."

77-68. Alexandra, the wife of Jannæus, succeeded to the throne. She committed the management of affairs to the Pharisees, as the only means of retaining the crown in her family. Hyrcanus, her eldest son, was made high priest.

68-63. Aristobulus II. son of Alexandra, contested the throne with Hyrcanus, and forced him to retire from public life.

64. Pompey, the Roman general, after defeating Mithridates, king of Pontus, and driving him east of the Black Sea, went to Damascus, where many kings solicited his favour either personally or by deputies. Aristobulus was among the number; but, owing to the intrigues of an Idumæan named Antipater, who was a friend of Hyrcanus, his suit was unsuccessful.

63. Pompey captured Jerusalem, slaughtered the priests in the temple, and entered the Holy of holies. He established Hyrcanus on the throne, and carried Aristobulus to Rome.

57. A civil war broke out between Hyrcanus and Alexander, the son of Aristobulus. Gabinius, proconsul of Syria, interfered; he confirmed Hyrcanus in the high-priesthood, but changed the civil government to an aristocracy.

54. Crassus, the successor of Gabinius, plundered the temple.

47. Julius Cæsar reinstated Hyrcanus on the throne. Antipater, the chief adviser of Hyrcanus, then made his eldest son, Phasael, governor of Jerusalem, and his second son, Herod, governor of Galilee.

46. Julius Cæsar, assisted by Sosigenes the astronomer, reformed the Kalendar. That year was extended to 445 days, to correct the errors of the ancient reckoning, and the length of subsequent years, beginning with 45 B.C., was fixed at 365 days 6 hours.

41. The principal men among the Jews complained before Mark Antony of the attempts of Phasael and Herod to undermine the authority of Hyrcanus, but he slew some of them and appointed the two brothers tetrarchs of Palestine.

40-37. By the assistance of Pacorus, the son of Orodes, king of the Par-

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thians, who had now extended his conquests westward to the Mediterranean, Antigonus, son of Aristobulus II., seized the throne of his uncle Hyrcanus. Phasael killed himself in prison; Hyrcanus was rendered incapable of holding the priesthood by the loss of his ears, and Herod, after narrowly escaping with his life, fled to Rome.

40. Herod was consecrated king of Judea, with idolatrous services in the Capitol at Rome, and immediately returned to Palestine. The Parthians had left Syria, and Antigonus had not the courage to oppose him; but the robbers in Galilee were so numerous, and the defences of Jerusalem so strong, that three years elapsed before Herod conquered the whole country. Antigonus was put to death at Antioch by Mark Antony.

37. Herod condemned all the members of the Sanhedrim to death, except Sameas (Shammai, perhaps Simeon, Luke ii. 25), and Pollio (Hillel) the founders of two different schools among the Pharisees. He also induced Hyrcanus II., who was living at Seleucia (near Babylon), to return to Jerusalem; some years after, he put the old man to death.

31. Battle of Actium was fought between Octavianus, the nephew of Julius Cæsar, and Mark Antony. The former was victorious, and ultimately obtained the government of the whole Roman empire, under the name of Augustus. Herod had taken part with Antony in the struggle; but by his address succeeded in persuading Octavianus to confirm him in the kingdom of Palestine (30 B.C.)

29. Herod, in a fit of jealousy, ordered his wife, Mariamne, the granddaughter of Hyrcanus II., to be put to death. He had already murdered four of her nearest relations, in consequence of the affection with which the Jews regarded the Asmonæan family; but his love to Mariamne was so great, that remorse for her cruel execution seems to have brought on him a fit of madness. The remainder of his reign was stained by the blackest crimes.

22. Herod built a theatre and amphitheatre at Jerusalem, to the great disgust of his subjects. Some time after, he built heathen temples in various places.

17. Herod proposed to the people to rebuild the temple; but, as they distrusted him, he offered to provide all the materials requisite for the work, before a stone of the ancient building was removed. The main body of the temple was built in nine years and a half, but additions were made from time to time till the era of the Jewish war (John ii. 20).

10. Herod completed the building of Cæsarea Stratonis. He also built other cities; as Antipatris, so named from his father Antipater · Cupron, near Jericho, from his mother Cupros; and Phasaelis, from his

brother Phasael. Herod continued to manifest the same cruel and suspicious temper, which had already made him hated by the Jews. He put three of his sons to death; he murdered his best friends; and even lost for a time the favour of Augustus. He died of a painful disease after a reign of 37 years.

Our Lord was born in the beginning of the last year of Herod's reign, or at the close of the preceding. Our common reckoning, which was introduced by the Abbot Dionysius in 526 A.D., places that event three or four years too late; or in 754 A.U.C. (from the founding of Rome.) The true date should perhaps rather be 750 or 749 A.U.C., for Herod died in 750 A.U.C.

The descendants of Herod, or as he was usually called Herod the Great, are so often mentioned in Scripture, that the following Genealogical Table of the Herodian family will be of advantage to the Biblical student. Herod had ten wives, but the names of two are unknown: (M = married.)

Antipater M. Cypros.

- Phasael, committed suicide in prison.
- Herod the Great.
  - M. Mariamne the Asmonæan.
    - Alexander, put to death by Herod.
    - Aristobulus, put to death by Herod. M. Berenice d. of Salome.
      - Herod Agrippa I. (Acts xii.)
        - Herod Agrippa II. (Acts xxv.)
        - Berenice (Acts xxv. 13..
        - Drusilla, M. Felix (Acts xxiv. 24).
      - Herod, king of Chalcis.
      - Herodias (Mark vi. 17).
    - Other three children.
  - M. Doris.
    - Antipater, put to death by Herod.
  - M. Mariamne d. of Simon.
    - Herod Philip (Matt. xiv. 3; Mark vi. 17; Luke iii. 19).
      - M. Herodias afterwards wife of Herod Antipas.
        - Salome (Mark vi. 22).
  - M. Malthace.
    - Archelaus (Matt. ii. 22).
    - Philip (Luke iii. 1).
  - M. Cleopatra.
    - Herod Antipas (Matt. xiv. 1).
- Joseph.
- Pheroras, tetrarch of East Palestine.
- Salome; survived Herod; instigated him to many crimes.
  - M. Pallas.
  - M. Phaedra.
  - M. Elpis.
    - The children of these three wives made no figure in history.

In the interval from the death of Nehemiah to the birth of Christ, the civil and literary condition of the Jews underwent several changes, to which reference is frequently made in the New Testament. One of the most important was the institution of the great Sanhedrim, or tribunal of 71 persons, which exercised jurisdiction in all important cases, but especially in those of a spiritual nature. In all cities which contained more than 120 inhabitants, judicial affairs were under the cognisance of a council of seven, from which appeals could be carried to the higher court in Jerusalem: there were two of these "small Sanhedrim" in that city. The founder of the great Sanhedrim is unknown; but it originated during, or shortly after, the administration of Ezra.[1] The high priest usually acted as president of this court, though the two offices were not always held by the same person: the displaced high priests, the chief priests, as the heads of the twenty-four courses were probably called, persons chosen from the elders or rulers of the 480 synagogues in Jerusalem, and other persons of rank (Scribes), formed the members. They usually met in the temple; but, in cases of emergency, they could be assembled in the high priest's palace. They possessed the power of life and death till forty years before the destruction of Jerusalem, when it was transferred to the Roman governor.

The date of the introduction of synagogues is involved in the utmost uncertainty; but it is most likely that they originated during or after the Captivity. In the time of our Lord, it is probable that wherever there was a considerable population of Jews, especially in the large towns of the world, a synagogue would be found. Pious Hebrews met there to engage in public prayer, to hear portions of the Old Testament read, and to receive exhortations and instruction. An officer called the "chief ruler," assisted by a council of elders, directed the affairs of the congregation; public worship was usually conducted by the minister or "angel of the Church;" and the sacred rolls were in charge of the servant (Luke vi. 22).

It is supposed by several critics that two classes of proselytes (lit. *comers to*) are mentioned in the New Testament; proselytes of the gate (pious and fearing God, Acts x. 2), or Gentiles who were favourable to Judaism; and proselytes of righteousness, or Gentiles who conformed to the laws of Moses: the former were required to observe only the so-called precepts of Noah, which forbade murder, incest, idolatry, profanity, theft, eating blood, and the escape of a murderer from death for his crime. That the proselytes of righteousness are mentioned in the New Testament (Acts vi. 5; xiii. 43), and that the name proselyte of the gate does not occur in it, are points on which all critics are agreed. But many are of opinion that the only proselytes to the Jewish faith, in the days of our Lord and his apostles, were those who submitted to circumcision, and that all other men, however fully convinced of the absurdity of heathen worship or favourable to Judaism,

[1] The earliest mention of it by Josephus is in 69 B.C.

were counted unclean Gentiles, with whom it was unlawful to eat (Acts x. 28). The name proselyte of the gate is sometimes assigned to the fourteenth century after Christ.

Two of the three sects of Jewish philosophers, mentioned by Josephus, play an important part in the history of our Lord and his apostles. Of these the Pharisees were unquestionably the first in origin and influence, for the opinions of the Sadducees must be regarded as the protest of a small, but powerful minority against the popular tendencies of their opponents. When these parties originated, if it can be assigned to any precise date, is uncertain; they first appeared in history during the high-priesthood of Jonathan (159-144 B.C.) The Pharisees, according to Josephus, "ascribed all to fate and God, and yet allowed, that to act what is right or the contrary, is principally in the power of men, though fate does co-operate in every action." They also believed in the immortality of the soul, and the eternity of rewards and punishments,—doctrines which were very popular with the body of the nation. The Sadducees, on the other hand, maintained that the soul dies with the body, and supposed that "God is not concerned in our doing or not doing what is evil;" but they disguised these opinions when they acted in the capacity of magistrates. The Pharisees had the reputation of being the most skilful expositors of the law, though they added to its precepts a body of ancient traditions, which the Sadducees refused to admit. It is doubted, indeed, if the Sadducees received more of the Old Testament than the books of Moses. Our Lord and his followers, in their frequent interviews with the Pharisees, so far from denying these statements, rather allowed their truth; but they brought against them the charge of hypocrisy, which vitiated every good quality they possessed. It led to all the crimes and errors of which they were guilty. The Sadducees denied the existence of angels and spirits, but it is difficult to understand how they reconciled this tenet with the numerous appearances of angels recorded in the books of Moses. The third sect of Jewish philosophers were the Essenes, who are not referred to at least by name in the New Testament: by their asceticism, piety, and mutual love, they attained to great credit in the nation. Josephus mentions the followers of Judas the Gaulonite (Acts v. 37) as a fourth sect. They refused to pay tribute to the Romans, and in course of time ran into such excesses that they brought on the Jewish war and ruined the nation.

JEWISH DAY AND YEAR.

The Hebrews reckoned the day from sunset to sunset, not from midnight to midnight, as is done by us. The natural day, or period of light, was divided as follows:—(1.) *break of day*, called also *very early in the morning* —Mark xiv. 2; (2.) *morning* or *sunrise;* (3.) *heat of the day*, beginning about nine o'clock; (4.) *noon;* (5.) *wind*, or *cool of the day*, so called from

the breeze that usually springs up in the afternoon in Palestine; (6.) *the evening*, of which the first part began at sunset, and the second at dark,—hence the paschal lamb was killed between the evenings.

Instruments for measuring time are mentioned as early as the reign of Ahaz. In the time of Christ the day was divided into twelve hours, reckoning from sunrise. The third, sixth, and ninth were the hours of prayer, and corresponded nearly to nine A.M., noon, and three P.M., of our reckoning.

Night was divided into three watches before the captivity; the *first* watch continued until midnight; the *second* or *middle* watch from midnight till cock-crowing; and the *third* or *morning* watch from cock-crowing till sunrise. Afterwards, however, the night was divided into four watches; (1.) the *evening*, from twilight to nine P.M.; (2.) the *midnight*, from nine to twelve; (3.) the *cock-crowing*, from twelve to three; and (4.) the *morning*, from three to sunrise.

The Jewish year was divided into twelve months, and each month was reckoned from new moon to new moon, an interval of 29½ days. A year of 354 days was thus obtained; but the seasons depending on the course of the sun, recur in nearly 365¼ days. There were thus eleven days of difference between the civil and astronomical year. If then the first day of spring were taken as the beginning of the Jewish year, eleven days of winter would have to run at next new year's day, twenty-two at the one after, and thirty-three, or more than a month, at the third new year's day. To prevent the confusion that would result from this, Moses commanded the priests to offer a ripe sheaf on the second day of the Passover, and to number the seven weeks between that feast and Pentecost "from such time as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn."[1] Passover and Pentecost were thus made dependent on the course of the sun; but the former was also celebrated on the fourteenth day of the first lunar month. If then the priests saw that the corn would not be ready to offer at the Passover, they intercalated a few days at the end of the last month of the year. This took place, perhaps, every third year. The Hebrews adopted the Babylonian names for the months after the captivity, but before that time they had names for three of them at least.

JEWISH KALENDAR.

Months.	Days.
I. Nisan or Abib,	Reckoned from new moon of April.
	1. Beginning of sacred or ecclesiastical year for regulating the festivals.
	14. Paschal lamb slain in the evening.
	15-21. Passover: feast of unleavened bread.

[1] Deut. xvi. 9.

Months.	Days.	
II. Zif or Iyar, (1 Kings vi. 1.)	.	Reckoned from new moon of May.
III. Sivan,	... ...	June.
	6.	Pentecost: feast of weeks.
IV. Tammuz, . .		Reckoned from new moon of July.
	17.	Fast: capture of Jerusalem; Zech. viii. 19.
V. Ab, . . .		Reckoned from new moon of August.
	9.	Fast: burning of the temple; Zech. vii. 3.
VI. Elul, . .		Reckoned from new moon of September.
VII. Tishri, or Ethanim,	... ...	October.
(1 Kings viii. 2.)	1.	Beginning of civil year: Feast of Trumpets on new year's day.
	3.	Fast for the death of Gedaliah; Jer. xli. 2; Zech. vii. 5.
	10.	Fast: day of Atonement.
	15-23.	Feast of Tabernacles, or ingathering.
VIII. Marchesvan or Bul, (1 Kings vi. 38.)		Reckoned from new moon of November.
IX. Kislev, . .	... ...	December.
	25.	Feast of the dedication of the temple after its profanation by Antiochus Epiphanes (167 B.C.), and purification by Judas Maccabæus (164 B.C.) Also called Feast of Lights, because the people lighted up their houses with candles. It continued eight days; John x. 22.
X. Tebeth, . .		Reckoned from new moon of January.
	10.	Fast for siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar; Zech. viii. 19.
XI. Shebat, . .		Reckoned from new moon of February.
XII. Adar, . .	... ...	March.
	14 or 15.	Feast of Purim, or Lots.

JEWISH WEIGHTS.

One gerah, . . .	10 grs. troy.
One bekah = 10 gerahs, . .	100 „ „
One shekel = 2 bekas, . .	200 „ „ (or 220.)
One maneh = 60 shekels, . .	2·5 lbs.
One talent = 50 maneh = 3000 shekels,	125 „

JEWISH MONEY.

Silver.	One gerah,	£0		1·27
	One beka = 10 gerahs,	0	1	1·69
	One shekel = 2 bekas,	0	2	3·37
	One maneh = 60 shekels,	5	14	0·7
	One talent = 50 manehs,	342	3	9
A gold shekel,		1	16	6
A talent of gold,		5475	0	0

The Roman mite,	£0	0	0·75
,, farthing,	0	0	1·5
,, penny,	0	0	7·75
,, pound (mina),	3	2	6

JEWISH MEASURES OF LENGTH.

A digit,	·9 inch.
A palm = 4 digits,	3·6 ,,
A span = 3 palms,	10·9 ,,
A cubit = 2 spans,	1·8 feet.
A fathom = 4 cubits,	7·3 ,,
A furlong = 400 cubits,	729·6 ,,
A Sabbath-day's journey = 5 furlongs,	3648 ,,
A day's journey = 240 furlongs, about	33 miles.

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